

# The GPRA Modernization Act Of 2010: Examining Constraints To, And Providing Tools For, Cross-Agency Collaboration



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ADMINISTRATIVE CONFERENCE  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cross-agency collaboration is widely viewed as a powerful means for government reform and performance improvement. Greater coordination across agencies offers the potential for the Federal government to address complex policy challenges that lie inherently across agency boundaries and jurisdictions. Further, cross-agency initiatives promise a means to increase efficiency, effectiveness and accountability by reducing any unnecessary overlap, redundancy and fragmentation. To further these ends, the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010, which extensively revised the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, requires the institutional presidency and executive branch agencies to develop cross-agency performance goals and specifies directives toward their advancement, use, review and measurement. The law also directs agencies to identify entities outside their organizational boundaries that contribute to their agency-specific priority goals.

Several lines of research examine governance across boundaries from studies of federalism and intergovernmental relations to research on outsourcing and public-private partnerships to a rich vein of study related to interagency coordination within the federal government. This study focuses specifically on cross-agency and cross-organizational collaboration in the federal government in the context of the GPRA Modernization Act and with attention to a series of institutional challenges to cross-agency coordination. It examines the use of tools by federal agency political appointees and career decision makers to work within or, when possible and appropriate, overcome, these institutional challenges. The paper sketches recommendations to encourage wider use of such tools to advance cross-agency collaboration in federal agencies.

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# **The GPRA Modernization Act of 2010: Examining Constraints To, and Providing Tools For, Cross-Agency Collaboration**

**Jane E. Fountain<sup>1</sup>**

*“America’s interagency toolkit is a hodgepodge of jerry-rigged arrangements constrained by a dated and complex patchwork of authorities, persistent shortfalls in resources, and unwieldy processes.”*

— Robert Gates, Secretary of Defense, 2010<sup>2</sup>

## **I. PRELUDE: OUTLINE OF THE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This report begins with a prelude including a brief outline and the recommendations offered for consideration by the committee. The second section provides a description of the background and impetus for the study and explains the research strategy, methods and scope of the research undertaken. The third section examines the structure and provisions of the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRAMA), with particular attention to its provisions for cross-agency collaboration.<sup>3</sup> Section four asks “Why collaborate across agency boundaries?” and reviews key public management, administration and organization theory concepts as well as selected research on collaboration across boundaries. The fifth section then moves to a survey of the institutional challenges to cross-agency collaboration that are for the most part designed into the structure and central processes of the federal government. Section six presents a series of detailed case studies that are meant to put collaboration into concrete settings across various policy areas and agencies. Section seven extracts from the review of applied and academic research and the case studies to summarize tools, best practices and lessons learned. A brief conclusion ends the report.

The recommendations are based on the full report below, but for the purposes of committee deliberation they are provided here as a “prelude” foreshadowing and referencing what is to come in the report itself. These recommendations are offered to improve administrative processes and practices in the federal government. They follow from the study

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<sup>1</sup> Jane E. Fountain is Professor of Political Science and Public Policy and Director of the National Center for Digital Government at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. The author prepared this report in her capacity as an Administrative Conference of the United States (“ACUS” or “the Conference”) consultant. The author gratefully acknowledges the help of ACUS staff and the research assistance of Christoph Demers. The author is particularly grateful to the current and former government officials, and other experts, who agreed to be interviewed for the study. All errors of fact or interpretation are the author’s responsibility.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur D. Simons Center for Interagency Cooperation. Command and General Staff College Foundation, Inc. <http://thesimonscenter.org/about/>

<sup>3</sup> The law substantially revised the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993.

and are intended for consideration by the Administrative Conference of the United States (“ACUS” or “the Conference”). The study and its recommendations highlight existing tools and identify new or enhanced tools that agencies may use to improve cross-agency collaboration and to prevent constraints (particularly perceived or real legal constraints) from unduly inhibiting effective collaboration. Given the broad scope and constrained timeline for study, these findings and recommendations are intended as an initial foray into a topic of lasting and increasing importance for administrative reform.

## **II. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations that follow have potential to improve administrative processes related to cross-agency collaboration in the federal government. These recommendations are derived from the research undertaken for this study including interviews conducted with current and former government officials and other experts, four case studies that examine various types of cross-agency collaborative developments over time and in specific contexts, and extensive review of scholarly and applied research, government documents and related materials. The recommendations are not ranked in order of importance or feasibility.

Government executives and managers, as well as agency general counsels and other attorneys, clearly recognize institutional challenges to cross-agency collaboration. Many effective leaders have developed strategies to address some of these challenges but enormous frustration typifies the reaction of many others. Effective government executives are skilled at working around, or in spite of, institutional barriers, but these “work-arounds” waste time and money, demoralize public servants, and crowd out opportunities for greater effectiveness and productivity. The passage of GPRAMA and the current Administration’s public commitment to a set of cross-agency priority goals and several other cross-agency projects, indicate institutional recognition of the necessity for cross-agency projects as a central and routine dimension of government performance. As a result, this study presents a timely opportunity to revisit and, in some cases, to directly address institutional barriers to cross-agency collaboration that may be amenable to change.

The recommendations are of two broad types: those for oversight agencies and officials – the Office of Management and Budget, the OMB Deputy Director for Management (which the current administration has called “Chief Performance Officer”), and the Performance Improvement Council (PIC), among others -- and those for agency executives, program managers, general counsels and other attorneys in agencies engaged in developing and implementing cross-cutting collaborative initiatives.

### **A. Recommendation 1: Performance.gov and Transparency**

OPPM, working with the Chief Performance Officer of the United States, should increase transparency on Performance.gov. Reiterating an earlier section of this report discussing transparency and accessibility of performance information on the website, GPRAMA clearly requires that Performance.gov serve as the repository for federal government and agency strategic and performance plans, including all quarterly status update reports and archival

versions of all strategic and performance plans. Performance.gov is meant to be transparent, making progress of agencies and cross-agency projects toward goals available to the public whenever it is feasible to do so. OPPM should make available on Performance.gov and searchable on the site all status updates, as well as the original reports from the interim cross-agency priority goal (CAP) projects.

If it is not feasible to redesign the site for this purpose, these documents should be made publicly available through the Federal Register or in another central and searchable website. Currently, one would have to search on the websites of each individual agency for such documents. The rationale for this recommendation is, first, transparency and provision of information to the public; second, the ability to see how progress accumulates, or stalls, over time as cross-agency projects work toward stated goals. Organizing performance review updates across agencies in one website is a useful means for shared learning and for realistic appraisal of the actual timelines required to meet “stretch goals.” However, it should be noted, on the other hand, that most scorecard and other appraisal information concerning agencies has not been made public during the past two presidential administrations (pre-GPRAMA), so there is a precedent of sorts in practice for using some discretion with respect to making such performance data easily available to the public.

## **B. Recommendation 2: Clarify Terms and Conceptual Relationships**

### ***1. Collaboration is not Duplication***

OPPM and related offices, the PIC and the Office of Executive Councils should offer guidance to clarify terminology in order to clearly differentiate between cross-agency collaboration and unnecessary duplication and overlap. They can do this by issuing brief, concise guidance and by adding brief, concise, and clear language to websites, reports, and other materials. While these terms are clear to those interviewed at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the General Services Administration (GSA), and other oversight agencies, the interviews with senior agency officials suggest that terminology and usage become increasingly unclear as they flow outward to agencies. It would be useful to gain greater clarity concerning the difference between overlapping missions across agencies, in cases where overlap is necessary and complementary and instances of unnecessary or wasteful duplication and redundancy to be eliminated. Currently, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) is required by Congress to produce an annual report that identifies fragmentation, overlap and duplication across agencies and programs in the federal government.<sup>4</sup> There is a danger that collaboration across agencies may be viewed by many agency managers merely or primarily as a vehicle for alignment and interoperability of joint or related activities. In some cases, collaboration does reveal needless redundancy that may be eliminated. But in other cases, shared expertise, information and capacity are not redundant but complementary and necessary. The detailed case studies of collaboration in this report and interviews with officials, current and former, bear out the importance of these distinctions. OPPM and PIC should construct and consistently use a clearer

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<sup>4</sup>See, e.g., U.S. GOV'T ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE, GAO-13-279SP: 2013 ANNUAL REPORT: ACTIONS NEEDED TO REDUCE FRAGMENTATION, OVERLAP AND DUPLICATION AND ACHIEVE OTHER FINANCIAL BENEFITS (APRIL 9, 2013).



vocabulary and conceptualization of complementary capacity, shared jurisdictional space, and shared operational space that would be productively leveraged from collaboration. This guidance also should include specific instructions to agency attorneys on how to make language clearer to differentiate between the various types of cross-agency collaboration.

***2. Clearly distinguish between collaboration for mission-oriented and mission-support goals***

Related to the previous recommendation, the same actors using similar means should make a clearer distinction between mission-oriented and mission-support goals and their respective relationships to reduction of ineffective overlap and redundancy across agencies. The distinction between mission-support CAP goals, designed to achieve consolidation of standard business functions and systems across agencies – e.g., data center consolidation, improper payments, and strategic sourcing – and mission-oriented goals, designed to coordinate authorities to pursue shared policy goals that cross-cut agencies – e.g., exports and energy efficiency – are currently conflated. This problem is important because the goals, tools and processes for cross-agency collaboration differ across these broad types of goals.

**C. Recommendation 3: Require Agencies to Name The Other Agencies, Programs and Activities That Contribute to Their APGs As Required By GPRAMA**

One of the chief purposes of federal and agency goals is to make clearer and more cohesive the key strategies and priorities across the entire the federal government. GPRAMA requires that federal cross-agency goals and agency priority goals (APGs) describe the agencies, programs, activities and other organizations that are related to a stated goal. Response to this statutory obligation has been varied. OPPM should articulate clear guidance to agencies to reiterate and clarify GPRAMA’s explicit requirements. Agencies should identify all significant organizations (including other agencies), programs, and policies that contribute to achievement of an agency priority goal, and articulate among its partners and stakeholders what is known and unknown about how they contribute. In particular, OMB guidance should require agencies to make clear the relationship between an agency priority goal and federal cross-agency priority goals. OMB is required to verify that agencies have developed and published goals, but OMB should verify as well that agencies have reported linkages to other agencies contributing to their priority goals. In particular, OMB guidance should require that agencies describe and publish linkages when two agencies coordinate their respective agency priority goals or when an APG is related to a CAP goal.

**D. Recommendation 4: Political Appointees at OMB (and in Agencies) Should Consult With Congress to Inform Institutional Directives That Support Cross-Agency Collaboration**

Political appointees at OMB (and in agencies) should continue to engage with key members of Congress and their staffs to inform institutional directives that would support cross-agency and cross-organizational collaboration. Agency legal staff, including general counsel at some agencies, who are political appointees should play a key role in these consultations with Congress.

Legislative change is a long-term process, but GPRAMA and its provisions show promise for legislation that promotes cross-agency collaboration around results that matter.

Traditionally, cross-agency initiatives have faced barriers in sharing resources and legal authority because of the jurisdictional boundaries of various congressional committees. Proactively identifying and addressing them should be on the agenda. To the extent that agency attorneys are part of the process, they too play an important role in informing and supporting cross-agency collaboration.

Interviews with leaders of successful cross-agency efforts show that most work in close contact with their congressional committees and staff over several years to develop shared understanding of the operational and other details of the partnership. For example, the leadership of the HUD-VA effort to reduce homelessness report that they regularly work in close communication with their congressional committee and staff. They noted in this regard that flexibilities are written into the statute, which allows HUD to allocate vouchers according to particular subpopulation needs and use metrics in communities. These flexibilities are in the statute due to sustained communication between the agencies and relevant congressional committees and staff.

Similarly, interviewees noted that leaders of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities announced the formation of this three-agency partnership at a congressional hearing in order to signal the importance of the partnership and to communicate its importance to Congress. The Secretaries of HUD and DOT and the Administrator of EPA appeared jointly in a hearing before the Senate Banking Committee. Congressional committees and staff are unlikely to understand cross-agency collaborations without considerable communication with agency leaders. The rationale and gains from the cross-agency effort should be made clear to congressional staff.

#### **E. Recommendation 5: Promote and Disseminate Promising Tools For Cross-Agency Collaboration**

Interagency agreements as a primary and pervasive tool of cross-agency collaboration are well known and well researched. Similarly, use of the Economy Act to craft interagency agreements when goods and services are purchased across agencies in the federal government is widely understood and used, according to interviews conducted for this study. OPPM, or the appropriate oversight body, should issue a directive to agency lawyers and legal staff to share successful documents (including interagency agreements and specific language that has been used to provide a basis for cross-agency collaboration) and other tools with others. This is particularly important when agency lawyers are confronted with requests to share information and data. They should be committed to sharing whatever is legally permissible and finding legally permissible ways to do so.

Building on these pervasive tools are other tools—including information systems and applications; special forms of training and goal setting—that lie outside traditional purview of administrative law.

##### ***1. Develop management guidance on tools for varieties of cross-agency collaboration***

In 2012, OMB developed useful guidance to agencies on the use of evidence and evaluation program design and budgetary analysis. OPPM should develop similar guidance to

agencies explaining and encouraging the use of tools for cross-agency collaboration. A knowledge and experience base exists among many federal officials who regularly engage in cross-agency collaboration, and among outside experts in management, but this knowledge has not been harvested systematically, organized, and shared. Agency managers require lessons learned, best practices, guidance, and training to gain knowledge in cross-agency collaboration. Having a toolkit that includes templates and models of processes that have worked would help leaders of cross-agency initiatives navigate new waters. A few such tools, of many, are noted below.

## ***2. Rapid Response Teams***

OPPM and the PIC should undertake a study of the potential to modify and re-use successful models for the composition and use of rapid response teams leveraging and disseminating the successful model of the Rapid Permitting and Review of Large Infrastructure Projects.

Rapid response teams may be thought of as small virtual agencies organized by function. They connote a working group that is strategic, intensively focused on a specific goal and working under clear timelines. Thus, they differ from the traditional, bureaucratic use of a working group. The model used to develop the Rapid Permitting and Review of Large Infrastructure Projects could be a tool that might be modified and re-used for other administrative processes.

One might think of the working group, in this case, as a virtual agency for permitting and review of large infrastructure projects. This virtual agency has leaders and a staff. It has a mission and has developed practices and procedures to ensure consistent, predictable results. It has developed practices and processes to increase concurrency. It has developed and effectively used a digital dashboard to organize, gain clarity on and publicly share information, including status updates, concerning an initial group of 14 large infrastructure pilot projects and continuing with a larger group of projects. It has developed tracking, monitoring and status reports on the dashboard for stakeholders and clients. It may be possible to modify the software and platform underlying the dashboard for other, related uses by other rapid response teams that might be convened to streamline specific, delineated, yet complex and multi-jurisdictional functional areas such as permitting and environmental review.

## ***3. Dashboards, Milestones, and Project Management***

The PIC, possibly in conjunction with the Office of IT and E-Government, and the Chief Information Officers (CIO) Council, should construct a list of “best practice” dashboards and their various functionalities to promote their use and re-use across federal agencies as a tool to support cross-agency collaboration and project management. This is not a recommendation for a complete inventory of dashboards or formalization of dashboard guidance. Rather, what is needed is an agile activity to promote sharing best practices and useful platforms.

Dashboards have proven their effectiveness in providing clarity concerning progress toward focused goals – such as permitting and environmental review of large infrastructure

projects – across agencies. Dashboards can be developed quickly and at low cost. Many of the dashboards that are already in use within and across agencies can serve as templates and, with modification, can be re-used across the federal government. Many successful efforts at large-scale federal use of dashboards have already demonstrated their use. For example, the dashboard for federal IT projects has provided not only an inventory but also clear visibility on those projects that are over budget and behind schedule. This type of information has allowed the government to eliminate unproductive or duplicative projects. For some IT systems and complex initiatives, in particular, dashboards can become project management tools, where milestones, roles and responsibilities are assigned and where progress can be monitored in close to real time by all participants. A second large dashboard effort, also successful, helped tracking of funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). More modest, smaller scale use of dashboards has the promise to provide clarity, visibility and monitoring capacity for a wide range of cross-agency efforts. Federal agencies should have capacity – or be able to find capacity – to rapidly “stand up” dashboards by reusing software and platforms already owned and developed by the government. For efforts that might be necessary to undertake with less immediate public scrutiny, these dashboards and project management tools might be established behind the MAX Federal Community firewall, so that only executive branch personnel can see more timely pre-decisional information.

A range of other promising tools exists. These, too, should be shared across agencies. For example, the rapid permitting and review case study demonstrates the value of concurrent reviews for siting and environmental impact.

#### **F. Recommendation 6: Improve Sharing and Harmonization of Data and Small Systems**

This report does not examine the critically important development of government-wide systems, shared services and the mission-support CAP goals required by GPRAMA. But within the context of cross-agency collaboration at the program level, a number of smaller scale IT systems and platforms can be better harmonized and shared across agencies. Many interviews pointed to challenges to collaboration posed by the lack of harmonization in simple definitions of terms, methods and criteria for a variety of activities. Some of these can be better harmonized.

##### ***1. Continue to search for ways to “build once, use many”***

Many smaller information systems and subsystems can be re-used and shared across agencies and programs. (This can be accomplished without reinvigorating a comprehensive federal enterprise architecture.) The OMB Office of E-Government and Information Technology should identify shared systems and cyber infrastructure that could be reused, with modifications, to further cross-agency streamlining and collaboration. A recent example is the use of e-Rulemaking information systems that have been modified to develop the new Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) online system that tracks FOIA requests and their status across agencies. This reuse has saved millions of dollars in new system development costs and sped its implementation.

**2. *Where appropriate, improve harmonization and standardization of data definitions and other terminology; review, where appropriate, data and other definitions required by statute with a view toward harmonization***

OPPM should issue guidance: directing agencies to identify impediments to data harmonization that stand in the way of promising cross-agency projects. Identified legal challenges include data defined differently across agencies when definitions are specified in statute. Several interviewees identified the problem of differences in data and other definitions that are in statute as a difficult problem to resolve when agencies seek to collaborate. At times, statutorily prescribed data or other definitions have a specific purpose. But some definitions in statutes may be amenable to change. The statutory definition may be outdated or its purpose may no longer be relevant. Moreover, agency general counsel and attorneys should determine whether definitions are actually required by statute. It may be possible to interpret statutory language with more flexibility than current practice may indicate. When considering these changes, agencies and OMB should engage in close dialogue with non-federal stakeholders and Congress.

**3. *Protecting privacy while building cross-agency capacity***

It is a particular challenge for agencies to share data that include personally identifiable information (PII). Agency general counsel and attorneys should develop forms for individuals to grant access to personal or other private information to multiple agencies, specifically named, identifying the agencies and purposes for which data would be used. Such forms might become part of a standard packet of paperwork to be signed for appropriate processes and services that cross agency boundaries. For example, the HUD-VA Supportive Housing Program (HUD-VASH) local offices ask individual veterans to complete and sign a form that allows personally identifiable information to be shared across the Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Veterans Affairs (VA). These two agencies have developed interagency agreements regarding their use of personally identifiable information for specific purposes.

**G. Recommendation 7: Building Human Capital to Support Cross-Agency Collaboration**

Several “communities of practice” exist among professionals in the federal government. Some of these communities form around shared functions, for example, communities of grants officers, budget analysts or human resources professionals focused on training. Other communities may form with a focus on policy domains or other specializations such as web masters, social media specialists, environmental law attorneys, and the like. These communities often develop informally and grow through productive exchange of information, problem solving and professional advice and support networks. They form essential networks for knowledge transmission and learning. In many cases, they undergird cross-agency collaboration.

OPPM, working with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the Chief Human Capital Officers Council, and agencies, should continue to identify and refine skills and to build capacity for cross-agency collaboration at multiple levels and across functional areas, including skills for agency general counsels and attorneys. Capacity building includes tools for selection, appraisal, rewards and professional development that foster expertise and experience in building and sustaining cross-agency collaboration.

GPRAMA requires OPM to develop a list of skills needed by members of the Senior Executive Service (SES) who will lead cross-agency efforts. This is critical capacity to build. But other specialized roles – financial, legal, personnel, other management support and program management – require training and development in supporting cross-agency collaboration as well.

OMB should proactively work with OPM and agencies to certify performance appraisal systems, including performance bonuses, to recognize and reward substantive contributions and leadership in cross-agency and cross-organizational collaborative efforts. In keeping with GPRAMA’s statutory requirement that OPM develop a list of skills and competencies required for sustainable cross-agency collaboration, those skills should be incorporated into performance appraisal, training, rewards, and selection criteria for the SES. Cross-boundary management should be a core skill for the SES. While some SES managers and attorneys will gain expertise in mission-support, government-wide systems across agencies, the skills required for mission-oriented cross-agency projects are quite different.

Many senior level attorneys are in the SES. If cross-agency capacity building were part of their training and appraisal, the importance of their role with respect to cross-agency projects would be enhanced. General counsels and other attorneys play a key role in cross-agency collaboration. In particular, they craft the interagency agreements and other interagency MOUs that codify and document how two or more agencies will work together. Cross-agency agreements that involve exchange of funds for goods and services “purchased” by one agency from another are covered reasonably well by the Economy Act. But it appears from interviews conducted for this study that agency attorneys have different understandings of the Economy Act and its relationship to resource-sharing across agencies.

Similarly, joint grant-making has the potential to streamline requirements for clients and to better leverage funds across agencies and to provide more coherent policymaking. The Partnership for Sustainable Communities is a strong example of this case. Their knowledge of joint grant-making, that currently resides, in part, in the institutional memory of general counsels and attorneys, should be shared across relevant agencies.

Among the particular skills of general counsels and attorneys that are highly relevant for cross-agency collaboration and that emerged in the context of the interviews conducted for this study are:

- Recognize flexibilities or “space” in statutes and regulations that might be used for crafting collaboration across agencies
- Use negotiation skills to craft informal working agreements when codification and standardization would diminish needed flexibility
- Develop interagency agreements to facilitate collaboration within bounds of reasonable risk, statute and other constraints and rules
- Share best practices across agencies in the strong community of practice among agency attorneys and general counsels

## **H. Recommendation 8: Leverage University and other Policy Research to Support Cross-Agency Initiatives**

The federal government can leverage human capital that is external to the government. Outsourcing is one means to do so. Relationships with university and other research centers are another. Many agencies have longstanding relationships to the university, nonprofit and private research centers whose expertise aligns with their policy area. These networks of knowledge should be encouraged and expanded to those agencies that tend not to use policy-relevant research. Some agencies should connect to university and other research organizations to build knowledge about “wicked” policy challenges that lie inherently across agencies. Specifically, many policy researchers examine and measure causal relationships that explain and measure how means (programs, activities, etc.) are connected to ends (goals). Evidence-based policymaking that is inherently cross-agency will benefit from leveraging external research. In fact, it is a requirement of evidence-based policymaking to use research results. The HUD-VA relationship and their partnership with U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) and other national organizations, relies heavily on research conducted by the University of Pennsylvania and associated research centers devoted to highly quantitative as well as qualitative research on homelessness. The successful boot camps at local levels that are responsible for decreasing veteran homelessness were designed and facilitated by the non-profit Community Solutions, a pioneer in developing practical implementation plans to reduce homelessness.

Researchers outside the federal government may be leveraged for identification of cross-agency inter-dependencies and policy networks. Indeed, many policy networks, particularly in disaster preparedness and national security, have been mapped by researchers due to pressing needs in those areas for clarity, measurement and improvements in operations. Food safety policy research has been catalyzed by the Pew Charitable Trusts’ food safety policy focus. This type of research should be extended to all policy areas in which interdependencies exist across agencies. Environmental and conservation efforts across agencies are fairly well understood. Policy networks in social policy and increasingly in healthcare have access to university-based powerful analytical tools and research that can support cross-agency collaboration by federal managers. Notably, as agencies reach out beyond the boundaries of the federal government to non-federal stakeholders, Congress will be more likely to buy in to these efforts. Congress tends to trust agency efforts more when many non-federal stakeholders are “on board” with an effort rather than complaining of being left out of deliberations.

## **I. Recommendation 9: Recommendations for Cross-Agency Leaders**

The following are as much a brief reiteration of guidance for cross-agency leaders as they are specific recommendations. They flow from management research and were discussed frequently by those interviewed for the study. For executives who are assigned to build a major cross-agency effort, what do they do? In the initial stages of developing cross-agency collaboration, determining the best, legal way to share information, operations, personnel, authorizes and other resources means that agency general counsels and attorneys are key actors whose experience can facilitate forward progression of a project. Many of those interviewed noted the importance of their professional relationships across agency boundaries and, in

particular, the knowledge sharing and advice network among the community of practice composed of agency attorneys.

The six recommendations below present key actions that government executives leading cross-agency initiatives should undertake.

***1. Set and communicate clear, compelling direction and goals***

Build commitment to a cross-agency vision, mission, long and near-term goals, and objectives. Frame the effort, set the direction, and establish the culture as one that requires collaboration. Convince key managers that the new collaboration will produce better results than the status quo. An important overarching goal, a vision of the future, is a strong motivator and provides the initial logic for organizing the initiative. Keep the overarching goal and its benefits at the forefront through communication and framing. To ensure buy-in with partners and stakeholders, the process of goal-setting should be the result of deliberative conversations rather than being sprung on participants.

***2. Understand the many varieties of collaboration required to achieve the stated goals. Fit the working group structure and tools to the task***

One size does not fit all. Collaborative initiatives require different types of authority structures and division of labor, depending upon scale, scope, urgency, and core task dimensions. Decide on an appropriate structure and define exactly what that will mean in terms of authority, resources, and division of labor. For example, some cross-agency collaborations are organized with a lead agency that supplies services on a fee-for-service basis to other agencies. The CAP goals by law are led by a White House official, but the organizational structure of the cross-agency relationships is left undetermined. The lead agency or managing partner approach differs across projects with respect to how much joint decision-making and problem-solving will be used. Non-federal partners and stakeholders are likely to provide key insights into the components of a successful strategy for proceeding.

***3. Establish specific roles and responsibilities***

Who will do what? Who is responsible for what? These are key questions. Develop clear decision-making processes including conflict resolution measures. Cross-agency collaborations require strong executive and management groups and well-organized working groups. The interviews for this study reiterate that matching titles and General Schedule (GS)-levels in working relationships across agencies are sometimes not as important as finding the best people for the task where “best” refers to appropriate expertise and experience. Notably, these kinds of efforts have a high opportunity cost in terms of staff time. But without incurring these costs, the chance of success diminishes rapidly.

***4. Develop formal agreements but don't overly formalize and codify unless necessary***

Countering much management “wisdom,” several of the general counsels and senior attorneys interviewed for this study stressed that, as one put it, “one cannot template the process



of two or more agency managers building a relationship of trust and an understanding of one another's operations. But the agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) that have worked can be templated and shared." Agencies and cross-agency partners are beginning to develop "libraries" of these agreements and at times put them into handbooks that every agency can then use. (Note that in the field of knowledge management this is known as capturing tacit knowledge, or know-how, and making it explicit and sharable.) The obvious need to have agency counsel check these formal agreements, particularly as they proliferate across agencies, should be clear. Two different categories of formalization should be noted. The first category is formalization at the level of the agencies that are developing a collaborative project. A second category is formalization at the level of, and standardized by, oversight agencies, at times, without sufficient knowledge of the programmatic details involved. It is the second category that agency attorneys caution against using indiscriminately.

#### ***5. Develop shared operations and shared resources that support achieving the goal***

Shared operations and resources have a number of legal aspects. Accordingly, ensuring that the relevant legal counsel are aware of plans, as they emerge, to share operations or resources and is included in the early discussions may be critical to ensure success. Similarly, counsels should be committed to aiding managers who want to develop shared operations and resources.

Shared operations and resources across agencies range in complexity from production of shared brochures and web pages to development of shared systems and standards; co-location, shared services and information; fee-for-service operations; standardizing and streamlining to produce consistent operations across agencies; and consolidation. For joint policy making efforts, coordination across agencies that share responsibility for key policy challenges – such as the CAP goals – may mean communication and joint planning to align strategies that are then implemented in parallel.

Many cross-agency projects have had to generate their own resources through sharing, borrowing, or otherwise leveraging existing resources across agencies. Indeed, the Integrated Acquisitions Environment, a government-wide system managed by the GSA, is funded by agencies through separate MOUs with each agency. This funding arrangement affects the governance structure and systems decision-making. Regulations.gov is still funded this way as was the early Grants.gov cross-agency e-government project. In some cases, these early MOUs took from one to two years to negotiate and formalize. This type of MOU has been used often enough across federal agencies that its use should be fairly standardized. Similarly, many cross-agency projects have been staffed with those on short-term details from several agencies. Canny federal managers are excellent at bootstrapping available resources until more consistent resources are available. But repeating bootstrapping techniques repeatedly is suboptimal.

#### ***6. Build shared performance, monitoring and evaluation metrics and approaches***

Participants should discuss what success looks like, both day-to-day when implementing a collaborative initiative and over the longer term in trying to influence desired outcomes. A mix

of quantitative and qualitative monitoring and evaluation techniques is advisable. To note one example, the Exports CAP goal partners developed cross-agency performance metrics for exports. These may provide an impetus for other efforts. Performance measures are needed to enable tracking, monitoring, and measurement of activities, outputs and outcomes across agencies and programs. Measurement rarely answers “why?” questions, however. Consequently, quick-turnaround quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods should be used to drill down into key questions and issues. Monitoring and evaluation are important, but without accountability for learning and accountability for consequences, these efforts may lack influence on behavior. To the extent possible, cross-agency projects should align incentives, rewards, and sanctions while being aware of the potential for perverse incentives that can be created by simplistic approaches.

### III. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Cross-agency collaboration in support of stronger coordination in the federal government is one of the core challenges of government in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. From its founding, the American system of government was designed to emphasize checks and balances, fragmented authority, competition of ideas, and competition for resources. The autonomous culture and vertical institutional arrangements that flow from these foundations meant to limit government power also limit government responses to a range of increasingly pressing problems. Efforts to prevent centralized authority have produced an intensely “vertical” chain of command running from each federal agency to its relevant appropriations, authorizing and oversight committees in the Congress to ensure that power rests with elected officials rewarding highly focused, agency-centric behavior. The vast economic and technological changes associated with the Industrial Revolution made the modern administrative state and a professional civil service essential.<sup>5</sup> Yet powerful institutional features of government design, primarily authorization and appropriations processes, reinforce agency autonomy and congressional oversight over single-agency issues. These institutional design features lead Congress away from addressing crosscutting challenges like food safety, disaster preparedness, and sustainability even as they limit the influence and expertise career experts in the civil service might bring to bear on these complex challenges. Yet the alternative of a strong unitary leader (the monarch rejected by the Founding Fathers) would do little better at managing complex trade-offs across policy areas. The unitary form of government was rejected early in American history for good reason. Yet the democratic institutional forms in a separation of powers system have externalities, or side-effects, that need to be recognized and managed.

In practice, public officials have cooperated across boundaries in a variety of ways for centuries, between federal and state governments, and for decades at the federal level via interagency working groups, internal procedures for managing shared problems, communities of practice, and other arrangements. Some of these interagency arrangements have been directed by Congress and are codified in statute. Others have grown through informal professional networks among civil servants who have similar functions and duties in different agencies. Still others

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<sup>5</sup> Among a wide range of studies, see Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New Administrative State*; Woodrow Wilson, “The Study of Public Administration,” *Political Science Quarterly*, 1887.

have developed around ad hoc working groups and task forces convened for specific purposes by presidents.

So-called “wicked” problems, i.e. pressing, complex policy problems that cross traditional boundaries and defy simple solutions, seem to have proliferated in an increasingly interconnected world whose resources are finite. Climate change, disaster and crisis preparedness and response, large-scale oil spills and other environmental catastrophes, terrorism, and an aging population provide a partial list of such problems. Other “wicked” problems, although less dramatic, include homelessness, crime reduction, smoking cessation, and the like. These complex, intractable, enormously expensive problems simply cannot be addressed through single-agency responses. Stronger cross-agency collaboration is needed to increase the effectiveness of federal efforts; to achieve cost savings and efficiency in government; to improve services in the realm of policy and also to permit more effective and timely environmental review for large infrastructure and other projects and investments. Cross-agency collaboration is a perennial demand of stakeholders of government, individual and corporate citizens stymied by competing, duplicative and fragmented federal agency requirements. But where different agencies perform similar tasks, e.g., in regulation of financial institutions, there may be important policy reasons why many constituencies want customized rather than standardized, one-size-fits-all approaches. Or it may be that the reasons for customized approaches made sense when they were developed but lack a sound rationale in the present.

Billions of dollars in potential savings from information and communication technology investments are lost or foregone as a consequence of agency-centric investments and planning which drive out enterprise and multi-agency innovations and systems. Moreover, economic constraints and global competition make it increasingly problematic to support redundant and overlapping back-office services and systems. Collaboration across agencies allows the federal government to streamline, simplify, and improve policy making and implementation.

Enacted in 2011, GPRAMA introduces requirements for cross-agency and government-wide goals and projects in recognition of contemporary political realities.<sup>6</sup> This study examines recent developments in light of GPRAMA, focusing on key dimensions of collaboration, challenges to it, particularly real and perceived legal challenges, and tools being developed and used by government decision makers.

In response to increased calls for cross-agency collaboration and to statutory requirements that require it in statute, the Conference sought to:

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<sup>6</sup> Pub. L. No. 111-352, 124 Stat. 3866 (2011). The GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 amends the GPRA Act of 1993, Pub. L. No. 103-62, 107 Stat. 285 (1993). For a detailed overview of the new framework *see* Clinton T. Brass, “Changes to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA): Overview of the New Framework of Products and Processes, Congressional Research Service (CRS) report R42370, Feb. 29, 2012; for a concise explanation of the Act, *see* John Kamensky, “GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 Explained,” IBM Center for The Business of Government blog *available at* <http://www.businessofgovernment.org/sites/default/files/GPRA%20Modernization%20Act%20of%202010.pdf>.

undertake a research project that will study the Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRA Modernization Act), specifically examining the Act's requirements for cross-agency collaboration, constraints to such collaboration (with a particular focus on legal constraints) and highlighting tools available to facilitate such collaboration.<sup>7</sup>

The study description<sup>8</sup> originally focused attention on the Cross-Agency Priority (CAP) Goals required under GPRAMA:

Among other activities, GPRAMA requires the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to coordinate with most federal agencies to establish outcome-oriented federal government priority goals—otherwise referred to as Cross-Agency Priority (CAP) Goals—covering a number of policy areas as well as goals to improve management across the federal government.<sup>9</sup> The Act also requires OMB to identify a goal leader for each CAP Goal and these goal leaders are responsible for coordinating efforts to achieve each of the goals.<sup>10</sup> Goal leaders are given flexibility in how to manage CAP Goals and are encouraged to leverage existing structures as much as practicable, (*e.g.*, existing working groups, inter-agency policy committees, and councils).<sup>11</sup>

As designated agency representatives work to achieve CAP goals and to implement the intent of the Act, studies suggest they may be facing certain institutional constraints to effective collaboration and thus need tools to aid them in their efforts.<sup>12</sup> While several studies have noted management, resource, personnel, technology or other constraints to cross-agency collaboration,<sup>13</sup> no study has specifically examined what constraints (real or perceived) may exist and what tools agency representatives may use to effectively collaborate given such constraints.

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<sup>7</sup> Administrative Conference of the United States, <http://www.acus.gov/research-projects/gpra-modernization-act-2010-examining-constraints-and-providing-tools-cross-agency>

<sup>8</sup> *Supra*

<sup>9</sup> 31 U.S.C. § 1120(a)(1). More specifically, the Act requires OMB, starting with the FY 2015 budget, to develop long-term, outcome-oriented goals for a limited number of crosscutting policy areas and goals for management improvement areas, including: financial management; human capital management; information technology management; procurement and acquisition management; and real property management. *Id.* The goals are to be developed in coordination with agencies and in consultation with the Congress. In addition, OMB is required to develop interim priority goals, starting with the President's 2013 budget. *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> Memorandum from Jacob Lew, Director, Office of Management and Budget to Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies on Delivering an Efficient, Effective and Accountable Government (Aug. 17, 2011), *available at* <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/memoranda/2011/m11-31.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*

<sup>12</sup> *See, e.g.*, Jane Fountain, IBM Center for the Business of Government, *Implementing Cross Agency Collaboration: A Guide for Federal Managers* (2013), *available at* <http://www.businessofgovernment.org/sites/default/files/Implementing%20Cross%20Agency%20Collaboration.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> *See, e.g.*, U.S. GOV'T ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE, GAO-12-1022, *MANAGING FOR RESULTS: KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION MECHANISMS* (2012), *available at* <http://www.gao.gov/assets/650/648934.pdf> (setting forth a number of constraints to cross-agency collaboration).

The initial study goal and objectives, based on the request for proposals, suggest the range of legal constraints related to interagency collaboration:

The goal of the project is to specifically examine the Act's requirements for cross-agency collaboration; identify existing constraints (real or perceived) to collaboration (with a particular focus on legal constraints); highlight tools available to help agencies collaborate; and recommend potential new (or enhanced) avenues of collaboration.

The study should:

- Identify and examine existing constraints (real or perceived) to collaboration on, and implementation of, CAP Goals by working with the Office of Performance and Personnel Management (OPPM) at OMB, as well as other federal agencies;
- Focus on legal constraints and accordingly, identify, examine and/or consider the following possible constraints:
  - Laws and regulations which may impede cross-agency collaboration, such as requirements affecting the division of labor, resources, authority and responsibility when agencies seek to collaborate;
  - The legal authorities, roles, and models that individuals appointed as CAP Goal leaders might use in performing their duties;
  - Legal requirements under the federal budget system which restrict the use of funds in ways that may constrain cross-agency collaboration;
  - The interplay between collaboration, which can often lead to shared accountability, and legal requirements that assign accountability for implementing a policy to one particular agency;
  - The role of contracts, interagency agreements and other legal documents in cross-agency collaboration;
- The interplay between cross-agency collaboration and laws requiring agencies to make information available to the public;
  - The role of agency general counsels, inspectors general and other agency attorneys in advising senior agency officials and those non-attorney staff who are coordinating and implementing cross-agency collaboration efforts; and
  - Highlight existing tools and identify new or enhanced tools agencies may use to improve cross-agency collaboration on CAP Goals and prevent constraints (particularly legal constraints) from unduly inhibiting effective collaboration.

## IV. STUDY METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE

### A. Research Methodology and Strategy

There is an enormous academic literature on interagency coordination, cross-agency collaboration and related topics to which I have been a contributor. I focused on the public administration and management journals in reviewing these studies. A search in Westlaw of journals and law reviews using the key terms “GPRAMA” and “Government Performance and Results Modernization” yielded only two articles referencing GPRAMA.<sup>14</sup> Clearly, a rich stream of study in administrative law on joint rulemaking and interagency coordination in regulatory affairs bears on the present topic, but this literature falls outside the direct scope of the present study.

I began with a literature review of available academic research in the fields noted. Although a great deal has been published in policy and public management journals and other academic outlets on the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA), far less has been published on GPRAMA, no doubt due to the recent passage of the legislation. The Government Accountability Office has published several reports required by Congress under GPRAMA. I focused on those GAO studies related to cross-agency collaboration (also referred to as interagency coordination, crosscutting concerns and similar terms). To the extent publicly available, I also Congressional Research Service (CRS) reports.

I also researched a wide range of other government and related documents and a small number of cross-agency collaborative projects in the federal government that were specifically recommended as examples of best practice during focusing interviews conducted for this report. These, as well as other archival research results, are referenced in detail in this report. I relied on Performance.gov, a website required by GPRAMA, managed by OMB, and designed by statute to make publicly available the strategic and performance plans and progress reports for the federal cross-agency projects (CAP goal projects) and for individual federal agency goals, including agency priority goals which also are required under GPRAMA.

In addition to the literature review and archival research, as of the date of this report, I have conducted 23 interviews, plus follow-up email contacts, with 31 experts. Most interviews were conducted by telephone.<sup>15</sup> Experts included current and former executives, managers, attorneys, general counsel, and analysts from OMB, GAO, CRS, GSA and six federal agencies, of which five are cabinet level agencies. One interviewee is a professor.

The interviews were meant to help identify themes and variety of constraints across agencies and policy domains, conditions that underlie variation in challenges and variation in tools (defined broadly as practices, technologies, and other steps used by public managers, attorneys and other experts) to work within or to overcome, at least partially, challenges to cross-agency collaboration. In addition to interviews with agency personnel, I interviewed officials and

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<sup>14</sup> Jody Freeman and Jim Rossi, “Agency Coordination in Shared Regulatory Space,” *Harvard Law Review* 1131, March 2012; Jennifer Shkabatur, “Transparency with(out) Accountability: Open Government in the United States,” *Yale Law and Policy Review* 79, Fall 2012.

<sup>15</sup> See Appendix 1 for list of agency officials and private individuals interviewed during this study.

experts at oversight agencies. Following Yin and other experts on qualitative methods, I sought to validate claims made during interviews by fact-checking in government and other documents and by asking multiple individuals from different agencies and functional specializations similar questions.<sup>16</sup> I used “snowball” sampling, “a technique for gathering research subjects through the identification of an initial subject who is used to provide the names of other actors.” The method is used to “overcome the problems associated with understanding and sampling concealed populations.” It is one of “a wider set of methodologies that takes advantage of the social networks of identified respondents ... [to produce an] escalating set of potential contacts.”<sup>17</sup>

## **B. Scope of the Study**

The scope of the topic is quite broad. The timeline for the study was brief.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, the method employed was to focus on a small number of illustrative examples of cross-agency collaboration in order to inductively draw out challenges to cross-agency collaboration, tools used by agency officials, best practices and lessons learned. I arrived at these examples through a set of focusing interviews with current and former officials at OMB, tasked with implementation of GPRAMA, and with other experts. The results of the initial focusing interviews led to a broadening of the initial scope beyond exclusive attention to CAP goal projects to include other cross-agency collaborative projects. I refined the study objectives to include attention to Agency Priority Goals (APGs), which are also required under GPRAMA and that can often include cross-agency collaboration. While some of the APGs relate directly to the broader CAP goals, it is not required under GPRAMA that they do so.

In a sense, this report might be used as a guide by a public manager stepping into the role of cross-agency goal leader. It is also meant to alert and educate agency general counsel and attorneys about the increasing volume and complexities of interagency agreements of various kinds that are likely to be required to implement GPRAMA. The initial research plan called for , two stages to the interviews: insights from program managers regarding cross-agency collaboration challenges and tools were meant to inform subsequent interviews with agency general counsel and other attorneys to gain a better understanding of cross-agency collaboration challenges and tools from two broad perspectives. But the time period for the interviews meant that I conducted interviews with program managers and with attorneys more or less in parallel. While this range of interviews traversed policy areas and agencies, many more should be undertaken in subsequent studies to flesh out and examine in greater depth some of the topics covered in this report.

The original research plan called for examination of approximately three case studies, drawing from CAP Goal projects and other cross-agency initiatives. These initial cases were

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<sup>16</sup> Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2014.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, Rowland Atkinson and John Flint, “Snowball Sampling,” in Michael S. Lewis-Bech, Alan Bryman and Tim Futing Liao, editors, *Sage Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods*, 2004.

<sup>18</sup> The request for proposals was published by ACUS on April 2, 2013. Proposals were due by April 30, 2013. The study agreement was finalized on May 14, 2013. The detailed project outline was developed and subsequently approved on July 1, 2013. The literature review, building upon past study of the topic, a set of interviews with government officials and other experts, and the drafting of the report was carried out from July 1, 2013 to mid-September 2013.

identified tentatively in the areas of energy efficiency, food safety and veterans' homelessness. The original study plan also called for a focus on cross-agency challenges and tools associated with rulemaking, grants administration and other management activities across agencies. Given the time and resource constraints of the study, it is beyond the scope of the present project to review in depth all laws and regulations that constrain cross-agency collaboration or to examine all of the CAP goal projects. However, the study focuses on the most prevalent and challenging constraints and the more promising tools for collaboration.

I examined cross-agency collaboration both between and within federal agencies. This focus omits a great deal of other collaboration across boundaries, notably, federal, state and local coordination and public, private, and non-profit collaboration. While outside the direct project scope, these broader sets of relationships were important dimensions of most of the cases that I examined and as a result find their way into the report's findings.

## V. THE GPRA MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2010

This section of the report examines GPRAMA in depth with respect to its provisions on cross-agency collaboration. The law has been viewed by OMB as a framework that further refines performance management in the federal government. The key additions to the original legislation include new requirements for annual performance plans, the development of priority goals, increased monitoring and evaluation of progress toward goals through quarterly reviews, requirements for greater consultation with Congress, transparency by means of a single government website (Performance.gov) as a repository of performance information and status updates, and new government roles and offices focused on performance improvement.

The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) (P.L. 103-62) was enacted in 1993. Its objective was to strengthen government management by requiring agencies to set goals, measure results, and report progress toward goals. To comply with GPRA, agencies have been required to formulate and write strategic plans, performance plans, and gap analysis for projects since 1993. Under GPRA, agencies must produce an agency mission statement and five-year strategic plans and goals, stated in terms of results to be achieved (outcomes), for each primary agency function. The law requires agencies to develop annual performance plans that state and describe performance goals for a given fiscal year and descriptions of the means by which such goals will be achieved and how their accomplishment may be verified. Annual performance reports also must evaluate the agency's success or failure in achieving its stated performance goals. Finally, GPRA requires OMB to produce an annual report on agency performance as part of the President's annual budget request.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> A large body of public administration and management research, in support and in critique of, GPRA and performance management has accrued. *See, generally*, Osborne and Gaebler, *Reinventing Government*, Addison-Wesley, 1991; Donald Kettl, *The Next Government of the United States*, Norton, 2009; Beryl Radin, *Federal Management Reform in a World of Contradictions* (Georgetown University Press, 2012); Christopher Pollitt, "Performance Management in Practice: A Comparative Study of Executive Agencies," *Journal of Policy Research and Theory*, 2005; Donald P. Moynihan and Stephane Lavertu. "Does Involvement in Performance Management Routines Encourage Performance Information Use? Evaluating GPRA and PART." *Public Administration Review* 72.4 (2012): 592-602. Donald P. Moynihan, *The Dynamics of Performance Management: Constructing Information and Reform*, Georgetown University Press, 2008.



On January 4, 2011, the Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act of 2010 (H.R. 2142) became law.<sup>20</sup> It extends GPRA by requiring, among other provisions, stronger development of government-wide priority goals and greater use of cross-agency coordination.<sup>21</sup> It has been noted that:

Among other things, GPRAMA establishes a new framework aimed at taking a more crosscutting and integrated approach to focusing on results and improving government performance. Effective implementation of the act could play an important role in clarifying desired outcomes, addressing program performance that spans multiple organizations, and facilitating future actions to reduce duplication, overlap, and fragmentation.<sup>22</sup>

In several provisions, GPRAMA requires or offers possibilities for collaboration across agencies.<sup>23</sup> The law requires OMB to include crosscutting, government-wide priority goals in its formulation of the annual government-wide performance plan, mandated originally under GPRA. Agency strategic plans, also required originally under GPRA, must under the new law include a description detailing how the agency is working with other relevant agencies and organizations to achieve its goals.

In stark contrast to traditional bureaucratic perspectives emphasizing agency autonomy, GPRAMA makes clear that many strategies, priorities, and goals of the government *inherently* lie across agencies.<sup>24</sup> The explicit and frequent mention of government-wide goals and cross-agency coordination for policy making and implementation clearly indicate that Congress endorses interagency and government-wide activities. This language demonstrates that cross-agency collaboration is increasingly being institutionalized into formal law and mandated by Congress as part of the required management practice of OMB and federal agencies. Several sections of the legislation direct agencies to undertake and improve interagency coordination.

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<sup>20</sup> P.L. No. 111-352, 124 Stat. 3866 (Jan. 4, 2011) (codified at 5 U.S.C. § 306 et seq.). LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 2142: HOUSE REPORTS: No. 111–504 (Comm. on Oversight and Government Reform). SENATE REPORTS: No. 111–372 (Comm. on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs). CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 156 (2010): June 16, considered and passed House. Dec. 16, considered and passed Senate, amended. Dec. 17, House failed to concur in Senate amendment. Dec. 21, House concurred in Senate amendment.

<sup>21</sup> GPRAMA amends the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, P.L. No. 103-62, 107 Stat. 285 (Aug. 3, 1993). GPRAMA “defines ‘agency’ as an Executive agency defined under 5 U.S.C. § 105, excluding the Central Intelligence Agency, the Government Accountability Office, the United States Postal Service, and the Postal Regulatory Commission.” See GAO-12-215R, p. 37.

<sup>22</sup> GAO, “Managing for Results: Key Considerations for Implementing Interagency Collaborative Mechanisms,” GAO-12-1022 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 27, 2012), pp. 1-2. See also, GAO, 2012 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Duplication, Overlap, Fragmentation, Achieve Savings, and Enhance Revenue, [GAO-12-342SP](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 28, 2012); and Opportunities to Reduce Potential Duplication in Government Programs, Save Tax Dollars, and Enhance Revenue, [GAO-11-318SP](#) (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 1, 2011).

<sup>23</sup> GAO, Managing for Results: GAO’s Work Related to the Interim Crosscutting Priority Goals under the GPRA Modernization Act, [GAO-12-620R](#). (Washington, D.C.: May 31, 2012).

<sup>24</sup> U.S. Congress. Senate Report 111-372. “GPRA Modernization Act of 2010: Report of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, United States Senate, to accompany H. R. 2142.” December 16, 2010. <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CRPT-111srpt372/pdf/CRPT-111srpt372.pdf>.

GPRAMA required the establishment of a Performance Improvement Council (PIC), an interagency body directed by law to share best practices across agencies and to facilitate cross-agency coordination, and, for each agency, a senior official to be designated the agency's Performance Improvement Officer (PIO) reporting to a second new role, the agency Chief Operating Officer (COO). The law also calls for the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to identify key skills and abilities of public managers required for implementation of GPRAMA.

## **A. Federal Government and Agency Performance Plans**

### ***1. Federal Government Performance Plans***

The statute requires OMB to develop an annual federal government performance plan to be published concurrent with the President's Budget. The performance plan must include the goals to be achieved and, for each performance goal, should identify "federal agencies, organizations, program activities, regulations, tax expenditures, policies and other activities contributing to the goal and a lead government official responsible for coordinating efforts." The performance plan also must include "common crosscutting performance measures; quarterly performance targets and milestones; and plans to address crosscutting major management challenges, including relevant performance goals, performance measures, and milestones."<sup>25</sup>

Section 3(a) of GPRAMA (31 U.S.C. § 1115(a)) describes the process that OMB will use to develop the government-wide federal goals (CAP goals):

(a) FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE PLANS.—In carrying out the provisions of section 1105(a)(28), the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall coordinate with agencies to develop the Federal Government performance plan ... The Federal Government performance plan shall--

- (1) establish Federal Government performance goals to define the level of performance to be achieved during the year in which the plan is submitted and the next fiscal year for each of the Federal Government priority goals required under section 1120(a) of this title;
- (2) identify the agencies, organizations, program activities, regulations, tax expenditures, policies, and other activities contributing to each Federal Government performance goal during the current fiscal year;
- (3) for each Federal Government performance goal, identify a lead Government official who shall be responsible for coordinating the efforts to achieve the goal;
- (4) establish common Federal Government performance indicators with quarterly targets to be used in measuring or assessing—

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<sup>25</sup> GAO-12-215R, p. 34. Briefing to Congress on GPRAMA.

- (A) overall progress toward each Federal Government performance goal; and
- (B) the individual contribution of each agency, organization, program activity, regulation, tax expenditure, policy, and other activity identified under paragraph (2);
- (5) establish clearly defined quarterly milestones; and
- (6) identify major management challenges that are Government-wide or crosscutting in nature and describe plans to address such challenges, including relevant performance goals, performance indicators, and milestones.

## 2. Agency Strategic Plans and Performance Plans

Agency strategic plans are required under GPRAMA and details that describe cross-agency collaboration.<sup>26</sup> These include a “mission statement; general goals and objectives” (in practice, sometimes called strategic goals) for all of the agency’s major functions and operations; “a description of how any strategic goals contribute to the federal government’s priority goals; and a description of how the agency is working with other agencies to achieve its strategic goals and relevant federal government priority goals;” among other descriptions required for strategic plans.

Agency performance plans provide greater detail for achievement of goals in the agency strategic plan. Regarding cross-agency collaboration, performance plans must include: “a description of how the performance goals contribution to the agency’s strategic goals and any relevant federal government performance goal; ... identification of the federal organizations, program activities, regulations, policies, and other activities that contribute to each goal, both within and external to the agency; description of how the agency is working with other agencies to achieve its goals and relevant federal government performance goals.”<sup>27</sup>

Section 3(b) of GPRAMA (31 U.S.C. § 1115(b)) continues by describing the responsibilities of each federal agency to develop goals and plans:

(b) AGENCY PERFORMANCE PLANS.-- ... the head of each agency shall make available on a public website of the agency ... a performance plan ... Such plan shall—

...

- (4) identify among the performance goals ... agency priority goals ...
- (5) provide a description of how the performance goals are to be achieved, including—

...

(C) an identification of the organizations, program activities, regulations, policies, and other activities that

<sup>26</sup> GPRAMA requires agencies, in their strategic plans, to describe their cross-agency work and resource sharing in their strategic plans. As set forth under “Agency strategic plans,” agencies must include in their strategic plans (a) a description of how the agency is working with other agencies to achieve its goals and objectives as well as relevant Federal Government priority goals, as well as (b) an identification of those key factors external to the agency and beyond its control that could significantly affect the achievement of the general goals and objectives. See 5 U.S.C. §§ 306(a)(4)(B), (a)(7).

<sup>27</sup> GAO-12-215R, p. 41.

contribute to each performance goal, both within and external to the agency;  
(D) a description of how the agency is working with other agencies to achieve its performance goals as well as relevant Federal Government performance goals; and  
(E) an identification of the agency officials responsible for the achievement of each performance goal, who shall be known as goal leaders;

GPRAMA also goes on to define “crosscutting” (in Subsection 3(h)(2) codified at 31 U.S.C. § 1115(h)(2)) to mean “across organizational (such as agency) boundaries” and “major management challenges” (in Subsection 3(h)(7) codified at 31 U.S.C. § 1115(h)(7)) as “programs or management functions, within or across agencies, that have greater vulnerability to waste.”

## **B. Federal Government and Agency Priority Goals**

GPRAMA also amends GPRA by requiring Cross Agency Priority (CAP) and agency priority goals (APGs), a designation among the broader list of goals that signals greater importance and, thus, under GPRAMA, greater attention and scrutiny. Two types of CAP goals are specified. These types are fundamentally different in terms of mission and the types of cross-agency collaboration implied. The “mission-support” goals are likely to result in far greater consolidation of generic business functions widely shared by federal agencies. The “mission”-oriented goals are far more complex in the type of collaboration required across agencies. The discussion of collaboration types, case studies and tools will make these distinctions clearer in subsequent sections of this study.

The mission-support priority goals of the government are specified by management function in GPRAMA Section 5(a)(1)(B) (codified at 31 U.S.C. § 1120 (a)(1)(B)) to include financial, human capital, information technology, procurement and acquisition, and real property management.

According to GAO, Federal Government Priority, or CAP, goals are meant to extend beyond annual goals:

The Federal Government priority goals shall be long-term in nature. At a minimum, the Federal Government priority goals shall be updated or revised every 4 years ... As needed, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget may make adjustments to the Federal Government priority goals to reflect significant changes in the environment

...

Similarly, OMB is required under the law to determine the number of agency priority goals for the government and to direct certain agencies to establish agency priority goals

every two years and to assign a goal leader for each agency priority goals.<sup>[28]</sup> Every two years, OMB decides the total number of agency priority goals across the government and how they are divided among agencies.<sup>[29]</sup> Agency priority goals are meant to reflect the highest priorities of an agency and to be informed by the federal government priority goals and consultation with Congress and stakeholders. The scope of agency priority goals is meant to be achievable within two years. Progress toward agency priority goals is reviewed quarterly by agency heads and COOs, working with the relevant goal leader. The reviews are to involve officials from programs and activities that contribute to achieving the goal, from within and outside the agency.<sup>30</sup>

### C. Quarterly Reviews and Use of Performance Information

Section of 6(a) of GPRAMA (codified at 31 U.S.C. § 1121(a)) revises the 1993 Act by requiring quarterly progress reviews and the use of performance information to evaluate federal government and agency progress toward their stated priority goals:<sup>31</sup> “Not less than quarterly, the Director of [OMB], with the support of the Performance Improvement Council, shall—

- (1) for each Federal Government priority goal ... review with the appropriate lead Government official the progress achieved during the most recent quarter ...
- (2) include in such reviews officials from the agencies, organizations, and program activities that contribute to the accomplishment of each Federal Government priority goal;
- (3) assess whether agencies, organizations, ... are contributing as planned ...

...  
(b) AGENCY USE OF PERFORMANCE INFORMATION TO ACHIEVE AGENCY PRIORITY GOALS.-- ... “the head of the agency and Chief Operating Officer, with the support of the agency Performance Improvement Officer, shall—

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<sup>28</sup> 31 U.S.C. § 1120(b). The requirement for APGs applies to 24 agencies listed in the Chief Financial Officers (CFO) Act of 1990, as amended (31 U.S.C. § 901(b)), unless otherwise determined by OMB. The 24 CFO Act federal agencies are the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, the Interior, Justice, Labor, State, Transportation, the Treasury, and Veterans Affairs. Also included are the Agency for International Development, Environmental Protection Agency, General Services Administration, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, National Science Foundation, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Office of Personnel Management, Small Business Administration, and Social Security Administration.

<sup>29</sup> GAO-13-174 notes that for the 2012-2013 APGs, “OMB did not require the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to develop these goals; instead, it directed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works program (USACE-Civil Works) to develop priority goals. According to OMB staff, this decision was consistent with these agencies’ involvement in past government-wide performance management activities. OMB has previously exempted the Nuclear Regulatory Commission from and included USACE-Civil Works in the activities associated with the President’s Management Agenda under the George W. Bush Administration and the development of 2010 to 2011 high priority performance goals under the Obama Administration.” p. 8 note 4.

<sup>30</sup> GAO-12-215R, p. 47 (internal quotations omitted).

<sup>31</sup> A report describing GPRAMA in depth observed that “GPRAMA’s provisions [for quarterly reviews of agency priority goals, or APGs] appear to be modeled on the Obama administration’s ‘high-priority performance goal’ (HPPG) initiative, where reviews were conducted as in-person meetings. See Clinton Brass *supra*.

- (1) for each agency priority goal, review with the appropriate goal leader the progress achieved ...
- (2) coordinate with relevant personnel within and outside the agency who contribute to the accomplishment of each agency priority goal;
- (3) assess whether relevant organizations, program activities ... are contributing as planned ...

The President's Budget for FY 2011 presented a set of agency priority goals. Quarterly reviews for these goals began on June 30, 2011. OMB published the first set of (interim) federal government priority goals (CAP goals) on February 6, 2012 and was to prepare federal performance plans in conformance with GPRAMA. In addition, beginning in February 2012, agencies were then to adjust strategic plans (which have been required since enactment of GPRA in 1993), prepare performance plans and identify new or existing agency priority goals to make all consistent with the federal goals and plans. Quarterly federal government progress reviews were to begin by June 30, 2012. The Performance.gov website was to be launched by October 1, 2012.

On February 3, 2014 the full implementation of GPRAMA, beginning a new strategic planning cycle, is set to begin. The federal government performance plan and goals will be submitted to Congress with the President's Budget. During the summer of 2013, OMB began to solicit and discuss potentially new agency priority goals and potentially new CAP goals. It is not clear under the law how many interim goals can continue to become the first set of federal goals and, similarly, how many agency priority goals, if not achieved in the two-year timeframe set for them may continue to be priorities. This implies that goal statements may be rewritten or reframed to demonstrate progress but also to continue to focus on goal areas likely to require many years to achieve progress. This is particularly true for goals that require cross-agency collaboration when the collaboration is itself an indicator of highly complex goals that require several policies and activities in several agencies to be coordinated for goal achievement.

#### **D. Consultation with Congress**

GPRAMA requires OMB to consult with the appropriate committees of Congress to develop the CAP goals.<sup>32</sup> Yet Congress, too, has a key role in improving crosscutting and government-wide performance. John Kamensky observed:

... for the law to be effective, Congress may have to change its behavior as well. For example, the law requires greater consultation with Congress in the designation of cross-cutting and agency-level priority goals, as well as in the development of agency strategic plans. But to do this, Congress will have to find new ways to coordinate its own efforts across committee jurisdictions. EPA and Homeland Security, for example, each report to over 70 committees and subcommittees, often with differing priorities, so Congress will

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<sup>32</sup> These committees are: the Senate and House Committees on Appropriations; the Senate and House Committees on the Budget; the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and government Affairs; the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform; the Senate Committee on Finance; the House Committee on Ways and Means; and any other committee as determined appropriate. See GAO-12-215R, p. 33.

likely have to find a way to coordinate internally in order to provide meaningful input. This will only increase when the law's provisions for obtaining congressional input on cross-agency goals become effective.<sup>33</sup>

GAO developed guidance and briefing materials for Congress in part to guide the consultation process required under GPRAMA. Regarding cross-agency coordination, GAO recommended that Congress ask:

Has the agency identified other agencies with similar goals, programs, or activities in their plans? If so, how does the agency plan to ensure that such efforts are complementary, appropriate in scope, and not unnecessarily duplicative?

Does the plan reflect coordination or strategies for working with other agencies as appropriate?<sup>34</sup>

It is not yet known, and unfortunately beyond the scope of the present study, whether such questions are being asked and what the implications of this line of questioning might be. In addition to monitoring and evaluation of agency behavior, this line of questioning would help Congress understand some of the complexities involved in cross-agency collaboration and, specifically, many of the statutory and other legal barriers to the collaboration that is now required by GPRAMA.

GAO also notes that Congress plays a key role in consolidating duplicative programs to improve the effectiveness of service delivery, policymaking and other government processes and procedures. GAO typically plays a key role conducting studies to examine potential overlap, duplication and fragmentation. Distinctions between *overlapping* jurisdictions and responsibilities, in shared policymaking and implementation space, and *duplication* of activities will become increasingly important for decision makers to understand in order to avoid damaging government capacity to implement laws in well-intentioned but misguided attempts to achieve efficiency gains.

To support congressional use of performance information GAO was to have developed a website on “government performance requirements and leading practices” to become available in February 2012 and a “Guide Supporting Congressional Use of Performance Information” to be published during Spring 2012.

## **E. Transparency**

The Performance.gov website is required by GPRAMA: “OMB is to ensure the effective operation of a single website that presents a cohesive picture of all federal programs ... [and]

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<sup>33</sup> Kamensky *supra*.

<sup>34</sup> GAO12-215R, p. 54. As additional sources, GAO12-215R cites include GAO, *21<sup>st</sup> Century Challenges: Reexamining the Base of the Federal Government*, GAO-05-325SP, Feb 1, 2005; GAO, *Agencies' Strategic Plans Under GPRA: Key Questions to Facilitate Congressional Review*, GAO/GGD-10.1.16. May 1, 1997; and National Conference of State Legislatures and the Urban Institute, *Legislating for Results*, Action Brief 9, 2003.

government-wide performance by presenting information about the federal government priority goals, performance plans, and quarterly review results; and individual agency performance.”<sup>35</sup>

In addition to provisions in GPRAMA directing transparency in the statute, several other calls to establish clearer standards for “machine readable language,” needed to be able to compare and to integrate across various documents online. For example, OMB Circular A-119 directs federal agencies to participate in developing and using “voluntary consensus standards”. The objective is to enable people to compare similar goals and measures across agencies, that is, across the entire government.<sup>36</sup>

GPRAMA was enacted contemporaneously with a highly visible initiative of the Obama Administration known as Open Government.<sup>37</sup> In President Obama’s Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government, the first memorandum of his administration, the president outlined the principles underlying Open Government, which are primarily to increase transparency, collaboration and participation of and in the federal government. On December 8, 2009, OMB issued the Open Government Directive, M-10-06, providing guidance to executive departments and agencies “to take specific actions to implement the principles of transparency, participation, and collaboration set forth in the President’s Memorandum.”<sup>38</sup> These directions intersect with GPRAMA’s calls for increased collaboration among agencies and with other entities, participation through stronger engagement of federal agencies with stakeholders and transparency through public accessibility of public information. Open Data, a part of the broader Open Government directive, was recently added to the list of CAP goals.

## **F. New Roles to Support Government Performance**

GPRAMA establishes the new roles of agency Chief Operating Officers, Performance Improvement Officers and the Performance Improvement Council. It also directs OPM to develop a list of competencies to build capacity in these new roles and functions. GPRAMA Section 8(a) (31 U.S.C. § 1123(a)) establishes the requirement for agencies to appoint “the deputy head of agency, or equivalent,” as the Chief Operating Officer who (b) “shall be responsible for improving the management and performance of the agency ...” Under GPRAMA Section 9(a)(1) (31 U.S.C. § 1124(a)(1)), the statute establishes the role of Performance Information Officer (PIO) and requires each agency to designate a senior executive as the PIO who will report directly to the COO. In GPRAMA Section 9(a)(2)(B) (31 U.S.C. § 1124(a)(2)(B)) under “function,” the statute directs the PIO to “advise the head of the agency and the COO on the selection of agency goals, including opportunities to collaborate with other

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<sup>35</sup> GAO-12-215R, p. 36.

<sup>36</sup> See Alice Marshall, “Owen Ambur talks about the work of the StratML Committee,” March 1, 2010, [www.examiner.com/article/owen-ambur-talks-about-the-work-of-the-stratml-committee](http://www.examiner.com/article/owen-ambur-talks-about-the-work-of-the-stratml-committee)

<sup>37</sup> Open Government has become a global effort. On September 20, 2011, eight governments, including the United States government, launched the Open Government Partnership, a global initiative similar to that outlined in the president’s memorandum. By September 2013, 60 central governments were either developing or had completed formal commitments to open government. See the Open Government Partnership. <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/>

<sup>38</sup> The White House. Open Government Directive. January 21, 2009. [www.whitehouse.gov/omb/assets/memoranda\\_2010/m10-06.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/assets/memoranda_2010/m10-06.pdf)



agencies on common goals. GPRAMA Section 9(b) (31 U.S.C. § 1124(b)) establishes the Performance Improvement Council, which, under law, consists of the Deputy Director for Management at OMB, who chairs the PIC; the PIOs from each agency; other PIOs; and “other individuals.”

Section 9(a)(2) of GPRAMA (31 U.S.C. § 1124(a)(2)) describes the function of the PIC, which is to “(b)(2)(B) assist the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to improve the performance of the Federal Government and achieve the Federal Government priority goals; ... (D) work to resolve specific Government-wide or crosscutting performance issues, as necessary; (E) facilitate the exchange among agencies of practices that have led to performance improvements within specific programs, agencies, or across agencies; (F) coordinate with other interagency management councils; ... (I) receive such assistance, information and advice from agencies as the Council may request, which agencies shall provide to the extent permitted by law.”

Section 9(b)(3) of GPRAMA (31 U.S.C. § 1124(b)(3)(A)) directs the GSA to provide administrative support to the PIC and (B) requires agencies, upon request, to provide up to two” personnel authorizations to serve at the direction of the chairperson.” GPRAMA Section 12 (5 U.S.C. § 5105 note) directs the Director of OPM in consultation with PIC to “identify the key skills and competencies needed by Federal Government personnel for developing goals, evaluating programs, and analyzing and using performance information for the purpose of improving government efficiency and effectiveness.” GPRAMA Section 14 (31 U.S.C. § 1115 note) specifies the timeline for beginning the requirements under the statute, specifically that a set of interim CAP goals and associated performance plans would be submitted with the submission of the FY 2013 budget. Section 14 requires OMB to prepare guidance for agencies to implement planning and reporting activities required under the new law. GPRAMA Section 15(b) (31 U.S.C. § 1115 note) requires GAO to submit a report to Congress annually that: (A) evaluates implementation and (B) makes recommendations for improving implementation.

This section has described GPRAMA and the key provisions that bear on cross-agency collaboration. The next section of this report briefly examines the early implementation of the new law.

## **VI. EARLY IMPLEMENTATION OF GPRAMA**

This section examines the early implementation of GPRAMA. It describes the initial set of interim federal CAP goals and the first round of agency priority goals (APGs). It then turns to OMB guidance for implementation of GPRAMA, specifically guidance to agencies on the formulation of APGs. OPPM’s role, working with the PIC, and its duality as both enforcer and facilitator of change is noted. Finally, the section concludes with observations regarding the enormous range and variance in the scope, dimensions and types of goals that have been undertaken and, implicitly, the varieties of cross-agency collaboration that might underlie such variance.

It is important to note that although this section covers wrinkles in early implementation, the achievements to date have been stunning in terms of clarifying across the federal agencies strategic and priority goals, inventories of programs, beginnings of cross-agency relationships – some already robustly developed – all with minimal resources and vastly understaffed.

An OMB official close to GPRAMA who was interviewed for the study noted:

You need to look at the process itself – especially on a government-wide perspective. It’s so complex and dynamic that to think you are going to structure it [isn’t feasible]. So focus on what you’re trying to do, then turn to your people to move those things through. The classical model is structure all the information flows ... We are saying start with the decision, the goal, then move it through with an [existing] irrationally fragmented structure. Some people say ‘you are conceding defeat,’ but I think focusing on goals and their achievement in very targeted ways is the best approach – at least in the environment as large, complex and dynamic as the federal government.

**A. Implementing the Interim Cross-Agency Priority (CAP) Goals**

President Obama’s FY 2013 Budget named 14 cross-agency priority goals, the first such goals in the nation’s history. Seven projects are mission-oriented, while seven others focus on mission-support goals. The projects grew out of existing administration priorities, but also responded directly to GPRAMA’s requirements.<sup>39</sup> The CAP goals are meant to be in effect for

four years, thus the same list of goals is presented in the President’s FY 2014 Budget and will remain active until February 2014, when a new set of goals will be announced concurrent with the FY 2015 budget. Discussion of the next set of CAP goals began in summer of 2013.

A list of each of the current 14 goals is presented below.<sup>40</sup> (Appendices 2 and 3 also provide a list of outcome-oriented CAP goal descriptions, goal leaders and related programs and activities.)

<p><b>Outcome-Oriented Goals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exports</li> <li>• Entrepreneurship and Small Business</li> <li>• Broadband</li> <li>• Energy Efficiency</li> </ul>	<p><b>Management Improvement Goals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cybersecurity</li> <li>• Sustainability</li> <li>• Real Property</li> <li>• Improper Payments</li> </ul>
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<sup>39</sup> For more information on the CAP goals see Executive Office of the President, OMB, “Using Goals to Improve Performance and Accountability.” [http://goals.performance.gov/goals\\_2013](http://goals.performance.gov/goals_2013), accessed March 20, 2012. See also GAO, “Managing for Results: GAO’s Work Related to the Interim Crosscutting Priority Goals under the GPRAMA Modernization Act.” GAO-12-620R. May 31, 2012. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-12-620R> accessed June 23, 2012.

<sup>40</sup> The FY 2013 goals as well as the FY 2012 goals are technically interim goals, since the CAP goal cycle is designed to coincide with a presidential term. The actual CAP goals will be named in February 2014, as part of the FY 2015 budget.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Veteran Career Readiness</li> <li>• STEM Education</li> <li>• Job Training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data Center Consolidation</li> <li>• Closing Skills Gaps</li> <li>• Strategic Sourcing</li> <li>- Open Data (newly added)</li> </ul>
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Clearly, these developments deepen the use of federal government cross-agency initiatives and call for development of knowledge to help public managers implement the intent of GPRAMA. The mission-oriented CAP goals seek to build collaboration across agencies to advance key policy priorities such as increasing energy efficiency and sustainability, reducing skills gaps and streamlining job training to improve the labor market. While agency officials work together across agencies in a variety of ways, the CAP goal projects represent an institutional and structural shift to increase and deepen such cross-agency connections.

Cross-agency collaboration is not new to the federal government. Interagency task forces, working groups, and councils have a long history. During the Clinton administration, agency officials developed shared websites called “virtual agencies” -- such as Students.gov, Seniors.gov, and Business.gov – to co-locate on one website information from several agencies. These one-stop shops, or online portals, were oriented toward key customer or client groups. The Clinton administration made an explicit decision not to try to reorganize agencies and programs but to use virtual reorganization of information to streamline and improve services.<sup>41</sup> Cross-agency efforts to share information systems at levels deeper than information co-location were met with mixed results.

During the Bush administration, a set of 25 cross-agency e-government initiatives, originally known as the Quicksilver projects and carried over from their inception during the Clinton administration, were advanced to consolidate information systems and streamline standard business functions such as travel, payroll, and authentication across the government. Primarily focused on cost savings by reducing duplicative system costs, they ranged across policy domains as diverse as disaster management, rulemaking, grants, benefits, and government loans. Both types of efforts continue, but the mission-oriented CAP goals extend and deepen cross-agency collaboration—at least in legislative intent—to recognize that “wicked” policy problems, defined by their complexity and interdependency among constituent elements, lie inherently across agency boundaries and require multiple-agency policy making and implementation.

Goal leaders for the interim CAP projects are presidential or OMB staff rather than agency executives. By contrast, the Bush administration cross-agency projects used a lead agency or managing partner approach, one that continues to be used for several ongoing cross-agency initiatives. The Clinton administration use of virtual agencies, which were pioneering

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<sup>41</sup> See Jane E. Fountain. *Building the Virtual State: Information Technology and Institutional Change*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2001.

efforts, had not yet established standard policies for leadership and operations but represented important experimentation and innovation-producing models that continue to be used today.

Although the CAP goals and projects are new, the capacity to undertake such large, complex cross-agency collaborative efforts has been under development in the federal government over the course of at least the last three presidential administrations. The difference is an emphasis on goals and their potential power as a catalyst for performance improvement.

## **B. Distinguishing between Mission-Oriented and Mission-Support Goals**

GPRAMA requires OMB to work with agencies to develop government-wide priority goals. The statute requires two fundamentally different types of cross-cutting goals: outcome-oriented goals in key crosscutting policy areas and “goals for management improvements needed across the government.”<sup>42</sup> The types of collaboration and processes to achieve each of these broad types of goals are entirely different and should be clearly distinguished as different categories of cross-agency collaboration.

The mission-support or “management improvement” CAP goals currently focus on streamlining and consolidation of settings and services. The cybersecurity goal is meant to standardize and implement a consistent set of standards across agencies, with clear levels of authorization and enterprise-wide risk management. Strategic sourcing is a goal to reduce acquisition costs by better using economies of scale and pooling. A set of consolidation projects, although not the CAP goals, offer a view into the types of projects represented in this category:<sup>43</sup> the consolidation of 12 regional offices into six by the Census Bureau; integration of medical care in a joint facility by the VA and Defense, a five-year plan; the government-wide payroll consolidation reducing 26 systems into four, an eight-year project; sharing administrative services in overseas posts through the Cooperative Administrative Support Services system; the Defense Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) project which renewed its activities in 2005; ongoing deliberations by EPA concerning consolidation of its science laboratories, a process started in 1994; IRS consolidation of paper processing centers from eight to three sites, which began in 2000; the Federal Data Center Consolidation (a cross-agency priority goal), initiated in 2010 and directed by OMB.

## **C. Implementing Agency Priority Goals**

OMB published 103 agency priority goals concurrent with submission of the President’s Budget in February 2012, as required by GPRAMA. Agencies submitted status updates, beginning in December 2012, and updated quarterly thereafter. Performance.gov makes publicly available only the most recent status update, making it difficult to track performance and accomplishments over time.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> GAO-12-215R, p. 32.

<sup>43</sup> GAO-12-542, “Streamlining Government: Questions to Consider when Evaluating Proposals to Consolidate Physical Infrastructure and Management Functions,” May 2012. [www.gao.gov/assets/600/591084.pdf](http://www.gao.gov/assets/600/591084.pdf)

<sup>44</sup> In this study, I have relied on data quality evaluations made by GAO in the performance of their mandate to assess implementation of GPRAMA. They have determined that the data on Performance.gov are reliable for the purposes of their mandate to evaluate agency documents, GAO-13-174, p. 3

OMB guidance to agencies on implementation of GPRAMA is found in OMB Circular A-11, for 2011, 2012, and 2013, and in the memoranda “Delivering on the Accountable Government Initiative and Implementing the GPRA Modernization Act,” M-11-17, April 14, 2011, and “Delivering an Efficient, Effective, and Accountable Government,” M-11-31, August 17, 2011.<sup>45</sup> Guidance in the August 17, 2011 memo updates and clarifies Executive Order 13450, “Improving Government Program Performance,” issued in 2007, which created the Performance Improvement Officer role in each federal agency as well as the Performance Improvement Council and the Council chairmanship by the Deputy Director of OMB.<sup>46</sup> The latter, a 40-page memo, details the agency-level leadership roles and requirements, annual reporting on performance programs, and agency priority goal submission processes and quarterly review requirements. The April memo, of four pages, reiterates central provisions of the statute.

Memo M-11-31 of August 17, 2011 states: “While some Agency Priority Goals may be linked to the interim Federal Priority Goals, OMB expects that most Agency Priority Goals will focus on core agency missions. . . . OMB anticipates that while some Agency Priority Goals will align to those of the Federal government, not all Agency Priority Goals will directly support the interim Federal Priority Goals.”<sup>47</sup> The memo further describes Agency Priority Goals: “The identification of a limited number of Agency Priority Goals does not mean that other agency goals are unimportant. Agencies may have important goals in their strategic plans or performance plans as well as legislative and policy priorities. They may also have other priorities that do not lend themselves well to specific, measurable, near-term targets. Agencies should consider all agency goals and activities on a spectrum of priority levels and allocate resources and management attention accordingly.”<sup>48</sup>

The Memo provides details regarding the choice of Agency Priority Goals.<sup>49</sup> For example, it conveys the “primary criteria agencies must use in their setting of FY2012-FY2013 Priority Goals:”

Agency Priority Goals must:<sup>50</sup>

1. Advance priorities for agency leadership and the Administration;
2. Rely predominantly on strong agency execution to be accomplished, not new legislation or incremental funding;
  - a. Align with the resource levels proposed in the FY 2012 and FY 2013 President’s Budget (or as appropriated by Congress)

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<sup>45</sup> OMB. Memorandum for heads of executive departments and agencies. M-11-17, “Delivering on the Accountable Government Initiative and Implementing the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010,” April 14, 2011, *available at* <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/memoranda/2011/m11-17.pdf>; *Id.*, M-11-31, “Delivering an Efficient, Effective, and Accountable Government,” August 17, 2011. *available at* [www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/memoranda/2011/m11-31.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/memoranda/2011/m11-31.pdf).

<sup>46</sup> Exec. Order No. 13450, 72 FR 64519 (November 13, 2007).

<sup>47</sup> M-11-31, *supra.*, p. 20.

<sup>48</sup> *Id.*, p. 9.

<sup>49</sup> *Id.*

<sup>50</sup> *Id.*

3. Support improvements in near-term outcomes, customer service, or efficiencies, and advance progress toward longer-term outcome-focused goals in the agency’s strategic plan;
  - a. The submission to OMB demonstrates how the Agency Priority Goal supports a long-term goal or the strategic plan
  - b. The goal statement clearly identifies the problem or opportunity the agency is trying to address and is framed in a way that can be easily understood by the public
4. Be able to discern if the goal has been achieved by the end of the 24-month period;
  - a. The Agency Priority Goal has measures and quarterly milestones to track progress
  - b. The goal statement has a clear completion date, target, and indicator(s) (which can be measured or marked by a milestone to gauge progress)
5. Be ambitious yet achievable within the next 24 months.

The Memo also notes that “This year, the Administration will also use the Agency Priority Goal framework to highlight goals demonstrating gains in efficiencies as well as with high public resonance, especially goals with the potential to improve understanding of the agency’s impact on people or communities. Each agency is strongly encouraged to identify at least one Agency Priority Goal that includes efficiencies and at least one goal with high public resonance.”<sup>51</sup>

The timetable for formulation, review, and adoption of goals sets out an annual cycle for agencies to follow:<sup>52</sup>

Step	Date
OMB, agencies, the PIC and relevant policy councils discuss Agency Priority Goals; agencies begin Congressional consultation	July 15, 2011
Agencies submit draft Agency Priority Goal issue areas to OMB	July 15, 2011
OMB provides initial feedback	August 5, 2011
Agencies and OMB discuss draft Agency Priority Goals and consult with Congress	August – September
Agencies submit proposed Agency Priority Goals along with FY 2013 budget submissions	September 12, 2011
OMB provide comments to agencies	September 29, 2011
Agencies return any comments to OMB	October 14, 2011
OMB concurrence through the budget process	October-November
OMB returns a final list of goals with OMB concurrence in Passback (most Agency Priority Goals should be final)	November 2011
Finalize remaining Agency Priority Goals (as needed) Agencies update a government-wide central website and prepare for publication	December 2011
Publish Agency Priority Goals concurrent with the FY 2013 President’s Budget	February 2012

<sup>51</sup> *Id.*, p. 11.

<sup>52</sup> *Id.*, p. 13.

OMB guidance also sets out a detailed diagnostic and analytical approach to reviews that could result in lessons that might usefully be disseminated across agencies. It advises, for each Agency Priority Goal, that the COO or agency head should work with the PIO to review progress toward goals, review variations in performance and to note reasons for variance; to look for patterns in performance that might suggest areas for improvement, and to “assess whether relevant organizations, program activities, regulations, policies, and other activities are contributing as planned to the Agency Priority Goals.”<sup>53</sup>

OMB also offered guidance on the key tasks of the Performance Improvement Council noting that the PIC “advises on how to resolve specific government-wide or cross-cutting issues; facilitates the exchange of useful practices among agencies; ... considers the performance management and improvement experience of others ...; receives assistance, information, advice from agencies; develops and submits recommendations to streamline and improve performance; and develops tips, tools, training, and other capacity-building mechanisms to strengthen agency performance management, facilitate cross-agency learning and cooperation.”<sup>54</sup>

The detailed guidance from OMB to agencies summarized here is meant to provide insight into the early implementation of GPRAMA and the slight amendments and clarifications of the statute that are taking place as implementation occurs. The next section examines some of the disjunctures that may be developing as implementation of GPRAMA moves forward.

#### **D. Transparency and Performance.gov**

The Performance.gov website clearly sets forth the government-wide goals and provides detailed descriptions of these goals. The complete list of cross-agency goals and their descriptions is a prominent feature while agency priority goals may be found easily using a filter. There is a goal type called “cross-agency priority goals” but this filter does not show cross-agency collaboration at the level of the agency priority goals. With the exception of energy efficiency, the majority of the CAP status reports do not mention related APGs. Thus, the linkage between APGs and CAP goals is not clear and can only be found by searching through each goal statement.

It is also possible to filter the list of goal statements by “theme.” But the categorization appears to be inductive, possibly based on using key words within the goal descriptions themselves. The coding appears to have introduced gaps in coverage. For example, under the theme “Community and Regional Development,” one CAP goal (Broadband) and several agency strategic goals are listed. Although the Partnership for Sustainable Communities includes DOT, HUD and EPA, only the HUD goals related to the partnership are listed under the theme of “community and regional development.” For example, one of the four DOT agency priority goals is development of high-speed and intercity passenger rail. This goal seems closely related to “community and regional development,” but is missing from the thematic list.

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<sup>53</sup> *Id.*, p. 15.

<sup>54</sup> *Id.*, p. 7.

Because the APGs are nested within and underneath the agency strategic goals, they are not categorized by “theme” on Performance.gov. To further cross-agency collaboration, it would be useful to make such collaboration more easily searchable on the Performance.gov website. As the website develops further, it may be that more powerful search capacity will be introduced. For example, cross-agency collaboration might be inserted through meta-tags that could then be used to index such collaboration and, possibly, to serve as data to support visualizations of collaboration across federal agencies. OMB might consider undertaking a pilot study to evaluate the usefulness, feasibility and cost of building this capacity. Alternatively, they could use challenge.gov or a partnership with a university or other organization to develop these tools.

While agency priority goals are listed in separate excel and CSV files for each agency, to make a list of all of the APGs in the federal government, a user would have to search each agency individually, find the icon, open it and combine these excel files for each agency. Then, to find APGs that include cross-agency collaboration, one would have to read through each APG goal description for text describing cross-agency coordination. If such coordination is not in the text, there is no way to find it through the Performance.gov website. This, too, might be made more evident through more powerful search and refinements to the design of the site.

It will be critical for information on Performance.gov to be archived as goals and priorities change over time. Currently, for example, only the most recent quarterly progress report for each CAP goal is available on the Performance.gov website. This makes it impossible to track progress over time based on information on the site. If older information will not be available on the Performance.gov website, it should be available through the National Archives or through other publicly available websites. This issue is particularly urgent because the CAP goals are about to change and it is likely that a great deal of information will simply disappear from the Performance.gov website. Thus, requirements for archiving and for access to archived information should be clarified.

#### **E. Slippage between OMB Guidance and the Statute**

OMB guidance expands the type of APGs beyond those specified in the statute to include goals that are *internally oriented* in addition to those that have cross-agency dimensions. OMB guidance offers a more expansive conceptualization of APGs and a somewhat different role for them in an agency’s portfolio of goals. This guidance differs from a stricter interpretation of the requirement for APGs to list other agencies and programs that contribute to the goal. GAO, by contrast, seems consistent in its emphasis that APGs should list related programs and should, where applicable, connect to the federal CAP goals.<sup>55</sup>

In at least one report, GAO actually offers several screen shots, reproductions of tables and figures in agency strategic plans and other performance-related documents, to show clearly the ways that agencies depict contributing programs in their various plans and reports and in their visual depictions of goals within documents articulating goal statements.<sup>56</sup> In an analysis of the ways that APGs list the cross-agency contributors, GAO observed:

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<sup>55</sup> See, for example, GAO-12-174, p. 9.

<sup>56</sup> *Id.*



We did not verify that agencies included all relevant internal and external federal contributors to their APGs. However, it was not always clear why external contributors were not identified for 29 of the 102 APGs. In some instances this could be explained by the goal being internally focused. For example, the Department of the Interior listed no external contributors to its internally focused APG ‘to build the next generation of conservation and community leaders by supporting youth employment at the department.’ However, our analysis indicates that 8 of the 29 APGs that lack external contributors are related to crosscutting areas that we have identified as at risk of potential fragmentation, overlap, or duplication.<sup>57</sup>

A potential explanation for the lack of inclusion in APG goal statements of contributing agencies and programs may lie in the monitoring and review of APGs as it is conducted by OMB, itself under severe resource constraints:

Although agencies are required, and OMB guidance directs agencies, to identify relevant internal and external contributors to their APGs, OMB’s review process does not systematically check whether agencies have identified all relevant contributors. According to OMB staff, they take a risk-based approach, using a tool called the Agency Data Completion Report, to ensure that agencies have provided complete information about their APGs for updates to Performance.gov. For each APG, the report shows whether the agency has provided certain categories of information, including contributors the agency identified for the goal.

However, the report only indicates if an agency has identified contributors and how many. It does not indicate if these contributors were internal or external to the agency, nor does it ensure that all relevant contributors were identified. In addition, while staff from OMB resource management offices and the PIC conduct more in-depth reviews of the content for agencies’ APG updates, these reviews lack a systematic approach to identify comprehensively all relevant federal agencies, programs, and activities.<sup>58</sup>

In another report, GAO found that OMB guidance does not make clear that agencies must provide linkages to other agencies in reporting their use of resources from other agencies or in pursuit of shared goals.<sup>59</sup> GAO reported that agencies did not identify external organizations or resources for 34 out of 103 agency priority goals. Some of the APGs are internally oriented and

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<sup>57</sup> GAO notes: “For example, NSF did not list any external contributors to its APG to develop a diverse and highly qualified science and technology workforce by having 80 percent of institutions funded through NSF’s undergraduate programs document the extent of use of proven instructional practices by September 30, 2013. Our past work has identified 209 programs across 13 federal agencies that are focused on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education, some which may have efforts related to those NSF is undertaking for this goal.” GAO, “Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education: Strategic Planning Needed to Better Manage Overlapping Programs across Multiple Agencies,” [GAO-12-108](#) (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 20, 2012). See also [GAO-13-279SP](#), [GAO-12-342SP](#) and [GAO-11-318SP](#).

<sup>58</sup> GAO 13-174, April 19, 2013, p. 20.

<sup>59</sup> GAO-13-174.

may not require external coordination. GAO claimed that its previous evaluations demonstrate linkages between agencies that were not reported for 29 APGS that are cross-agency in nature out of 102 total APGs. According to GAO's count only two APGs describe such connections.

But the OMB Memo 11-31 of August 17, 2011 specifically advises agencies that APGs may be oriented toward internal agency goals. There may be some small contradiction between the guidance in this memo, other OMB guidance, and the interpretation implied by the GAO reports discussed here. This confusion should be clarified. The GPRAMA Modernization Act clearly states that APGs must note other agencies and programs, but it does not state that APGs must be cross-agency in nature. It should be made clear exactly how many APGs are "internally oriented" versus those that have cross-agency dimensions.

## **F. Clarifying the Roles of Partners**

GPRAMA requires that CAP goal and agency priority goal leaders simply list the agencies, programs, activities and other organizations that contribute to achievement of a given goal. There is no statutory requirement for goal leaders to note various levels of importance of such goal partners or how these goal partners inter-relate for CAP goal projects and APGs.<sup>60</sup> Useful questions to ask as implementation of GPRAMA continues include: How many partners are contributing to a goal? Which partners play key roles? Which programs and activities are most important and by what criteria? Which activities and programs across agencies are highly interdependent operationally? Which programs and activities operate largely in parallel toward achievement of a broader goal? How is this hierarchy of goal partners reflected in the working groups, teams and governance structure? What are the best ways to differentiate different types of cross-agency networks – size, dollar amounts, other indicators of importance, separate and competing jurisdictions to be reconciled or managed, type of goal and tasks implied by goal type, amount of knowledge about means and ends available given the goal, ability and desirability to develop quantifiable goals and metrics. Should measures of "maturity level" from cross-agency projects be developed?

While program managers are likely to explain how the network of partners across agencies are to interact, legal tools, such as memoranda of understanding, may be used to clarify roles and responsibilities in relationship to the cross-agency collaboration. The discussion required to formulate such memoranda are themselves useful in building communication across agency partners, learning details about one another's operations and other agency and program dimensions, and clarifying roles in a somewhat binding written document. Another critical dimension is the role of law and rules. In mapping the agencies that contribute to a particular goal, questions to ask include: What statutes or rules constrain or challenge cross-agency collaboration? Of these constraints, which are amenable to change, either by seeking changes to law, rules or practice?

Currently, agencies are providing an inventory of their programs. A complete list of agency programs is now available on Performance.gov. A key next step is to identify how these

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<sup>60</sup> Program evaluation methods, especially logic modeling, provide primary tools to address this issue.

programs are connected across agencies through their relationship to key government missions, goals and functions. One potential input to this effort may relate to GAO's work on duplication. Under Section 21 of Public Law 111-139, GAO is tasked with identification of overlap and redundancy in goals and activities.<sup>61</sup> Mapping across programs should also identify task and activity interdependences that can be leveraged to increase efficiency, effectiveness and accountability in shared policymaking and implementation spaces. For example, rapid permitting and review of large infrastructure projects has been substantially improved by the major agencies involved in permitting and review working collaboratively to map relationships across their key business processes with respect to permitting and review. Similar process mapping across agencies, within or between departments, would generate positive gains for the government. While most agencies know their key partners because they work together, these process maps often remain tacit knowledge and are largely unknown to those outside the network including OMB, Congress and other oversight bodies.

### **G. The Performance Improvement Council (PIC)**

The PIC was formed to foster performance improvements in Federal programs. It is comprised of the Federal department and agency Performance Improvement Officers (PIOs) and senior-level officials from OMB. The PIC is one of five interagency management councils and advisory boards that are supported by the Office of Executive Councils in the Office of Government-wide Policy at GSA.<sup>62</sup> Like the Councils themselves, the Office of Executive Councils serves bridging and support roles, working with OMB, to "identify government-wide performance improvement initiatives," coordinate cross-agency and government-wide working groups, and further implementation of new programs and processes.<sup>63</sup>

The PIC seeks to coordinate cross-agency learning and dissemination of best practices in a way that is relatively novel in the federal government. The Council has a small staff with limited capacity but a bold vision and a complex array of interactions with other interagency groups that leverage the PIC's efforts. One of the principal managers provides support for the CAP goals and working groups related to GPRAMA. A colleague focuses on capability and capacity building. A third principal staff member focuses on the social and behavioral sciences team and is an expert on visualization. The PIC is supported by a small consulting team and about ten detailees from agencies, working on various projects.

The current initiatives of the PIC include their support to further development and implementation of agency high priority goals (APGs); support to PIOs and others for the advancement of cross-cutting performance including the CAP goals; and information technology support for the above including enhancements to Performance.gov in its role as a tool for public managers in their development of strategic and performance plans, agency reviews and performance updates. The PIC has developed workshops, tools and other convening structures

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<sup>61</sup> See <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-111publ139/pdf/PLAW-111publ139.pdf>.

<sup>62</sup> The other councils are: the Chief Acquisition Officers Council, the Chief Financial Officers Council, the Chief Information Officers Council, and the President's Management Council and President's Management Advisory Board.

<sup>63</sup> See The Office of Executive Councils at [www.gsa.gov/portal/category/101095](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/101095).

and practices including initiatives to promote analysis of data as a business practice, to help agencies develop their agency priority goals and to improve the effectiveness of quarterly reviews. Sharing agency practices and convening managers across agencies has been a particularly effective form of organizational learning.

The PIC is in the process of developing a performance learning center to provide training, tutorials, tools, communication platforms and other materials to support capability building to support performance management in the middle ranks of career managers and analysts. For example, the PIC has worked with OPM to develop a career roadmap that details the skills, as well as competencies, for a variety of performance management functions and practices that extend across position classifications and that begins at the GS-9 level. The online performance learning center is also meant to use crowdsourcing to encourage community members to share and advance ideas and practices across Federal departments and agencies and inter-governmentally.

The PIC, broadly speaking, relies on a theory of change that is not the result of guidance to agencies per se, but the result of focusing leadership attention, data analysis and facilitated interaction to help agencies develop a path toward the implementation of new programs, tools and methods. Coordination is costly; the PIC supplies coordination support as well as expertise in performance management. While OMB focuses on policy, the PIC focuses on implementation in part by facilitating exchanges of ideas and knowledge among agencies. The PIC plays a central coordinating function as a partner to agencies, an objective expert observer of developments and as a complement to OPPM and related units at OMB.

#### **H. OPPM and the PIC: Dual Roles of Facilitator and Enforcer**

OPPM and the PIC play critical roles in cross-agency collaboration by requiring, fostering, managing and measuring coordination. But OPPM currently has limited capacity with an office of about 10 staff. This constrains the ability of OPPM to manage across agencies even when working in conjunction with OMB counterpart offices and support in GSA. One question is how much coordination management should be centralized at the OMB level and, if it is, what capacity is required? Not surprisingly, some agency officials interviewed prefer that more central capacity to manage coordination should not be built, but OMB officials report a strong demand for their facilitation of cross-agency coordination.

OPPM (often in coordination with counterpart OMB units such as the Office of IT and E-Government and Office of Federal Financial Management (OFFM)) and the PIC (often working in coordination with other cross-agency councils, including the other chief officer councils) play multiple catalytic roles with respect to cross-agency collaboration. These two entities often act as a facilitator for cross-agency collaboration efforts and often disseminate promising practices and innovations. But OMB has a statutory obligation to enforce laws and rules, thus, when necessary, it plays an enforcement role in demanding compliance with an administration's directives to agencies. Collaboration does not mean that tough political situations and conflicts will not occur. OMB and other oversight agency managers, as well as political appointees, inevitably have to manage serious and intractable differences among agencies.

Running counter to this capacity at OPPM, however, are arguments made by several officials interviewed, including primarily general counsel and attorneys, that the most effective means for resolving impasses across agencies are conducted within the agencies, among those officials most familiar with the substance of the challenges, and in as informal a manner as possible. Where do the results of study fall? It all depends, meaning that the answer is highly contingent. When agencies can resolve challenges to collaboration at the agency level, this is the best course of action. But when impasses continue for long periods without resolution, the PIOs, working with the PIC and OPPM, have a critical role to play as well as a clear set of roles and responsibilities under GPRAMA. They can try to “enforce” collaboration, although edict is likely to produce suboptimal results and unfortunate externalities. Or, they can bring to bear persuasive examples of collaboration from other agencies and policy areas that might be instructive and may serve to allow agencies to construct a solution. By focusing OMB’s attention on impasses that resist solution, the ability of agencies to shirk their responsibility to develop collaborative capacity is decreased by being called to account. Ultimately, OMB’s ability to influence agency behaviors is constrained because agencies ultimately are accountable to faithful executive of their organic authorizing acts and appropriations acts rather than development of what may be viewed as discretionary activity.

### **I. Substantial Variation across Goal Type and Scope**

A key requirement for moving forward with the potential of cross-agency collaboration is to develop better understanding of the wide variety of types of collaboration. Of equal importance for this study, examination of the CAP goal projects indicates that the scope of *mission-oriented* projects is quite large encompassing much more than simple opportunities for cross-agency collaboration within the typical meaning of that phrase. For example, increasing national exports is a CAP goal. The activities under this goal range from negotiation of bilateral and other trade agreements to helping small businesses to export and even to consolidating statistical data required for trade policy analysis but currently residing in different agency databases. As a practical matter, many of the projects under this broad CAP goal are proceeding in parallel. In other words, many agencies and programs are “collaborating” only in the sense that they are focused on the same overarching goal. Thus, the CAP goals in many cases are meant to bring greater attention and coherence to a policy area of importance to the nation. In these cases, collaboration means sustained attention to a broad, shared goal.

The *mission-support* CAP goal projects are quite different. In many cases, their purpose is to develop government-wide systems or standards for management support functions that tend to vary little, if at all, across agencies and thus can be streamlined. Some of the work within these projects may entail consolidation and possibly elimination of some agency-based systems and a move to enterprise-level systems. For these cases, collaboration implies consolidation.

Agency priority goals range across mission-oriented and mission-support. AGPs also vary substantially in the scope and ambition of the stated goal. The many types of variation and differences in scale make it important to draw distinctions among goals, the types of collaboration required for different types of goals and the inherent challenges to collaboration across goal categories.

## J. Section Summary

The discussion above is meant to highlight some of the implementation issues that have arisen in the brief time that has elapsed since the enactment of GPRAMA. Not surprisingly, the actual implementation differs slightly from the language of the statute. While some agencies and programs have used GPRAMA as a catalyst for change, others have not. Many agencies have not responded to date regarding the other agencies, programs and organizations that contribute to their goals. We see that the response has been less than optimal in terms of reporting such relationships and that OMB does not have rigorous filters to identify under-reporting of such potential relationships.

The next section steps back from GPRAMA temporarily to turn to a discussion of collaboration itself and some of the core theories and conceptual frameworks used to examine inter-organizational collaboration.

## VII. CROSS-AGENCY COLLABORATION: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS AND STRATEGIES

Collaboration across agencies ranges from informal conversations across agency lines to, at the other extreme, consolidation and complete duplication of agency policy and operations. This study is not concerned with identification of duplication. By contrast, the interagency collaboration of interest here connotes that more than one agency is needed to achieve a particular policy or operational goal, and the agencies must work together to somehow coordinate capacity.<sup>64</sup>

Nevertheless, there are many small opportunities for eliminating redundancies across agencies and for reducing small frictions and fragmentation across agencies. Not all such small opportunities would be cost-effective to pursue. Collaboration entails transaction costs, especially in terms of scarce staff time. However, many of these small efforts are worthwhile and essential to streamlining and simplification, especially of information and other administrative processes. For example, they include reducing the number of times a client, applicant, sponsor, etc. must submit the same or similar information; the number of different reporting requirements that ask for essentially the same information; and small, unnecessary differences in data

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<sup>64</sup> This report summarizes only a few dimensions of cross-agency collaboration in the context of GPRAMA and implications for agency general counsels and attorneys. Burgeoning streams of research examine managing in networks, collaborative governance, interagency capacity building and many more perspectives on multi-dimensional, often weakly conceptualized phenomena. For a small sample of studies see Steven Kelman, Sounman Hong and Irwin Turbitt, "Are There Managerial Practices Associated with the Outcomes of an Interagency Service Delivery Collaboration? Evidence from British Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships," *J Public Adm Res Theory*, 2013; Robert Agranoff, *Managing within Networks: Adding Value to Public Organizations*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2007; John Bryson, Barbara Crosby, and Melissa Middleton Stone, "The Design and Implementation of Cross-Sector Collaborations: Propositions from the Literature," *Pub Admin Rev* 66(1): 44-55, 2006; Thad Hall and Laurence O'Toole, "Shaping Formal Networks through the Regulatory Process," *Admin & Soc* 36(2): 186-207, 2004; Michael McGuire, "Collaborative Public Management: Assessing What We Know and How We Know It," *Pub Admin Rev* 66(1): 33-43, 2006; Craig W. Thomas, *Bureaucratic Landscapes: Interagency Cooperation and the Preservation of Biodiversity*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 2003.

definitions, methods, etc. that impede collaboration and systems coordination across agencies. Also important to coordinate are local level and regional differences in administrative processes related to policy implementation and delivery. One of the case studies in this report, on reducing veteran homelessness, illustrates the importance of collaboration at the regional and local levels in addition to collaboration at the federal level in order for cross-agency goals to be achieved.

“Cross-agency collaboration” is a broad term that encompasses several different types of goals and purposes. Agencies may collaborate across boundaries for policy development. They may collaborate to work together on implementation. They may seek to streamline and coordinate their oversight and monitoring operations or the criteria that guide those operations. In some cases, agencies seek to share or exchange information or may share databases or information systems. Or they might collaborate to share training. These purposes differ substantially and imply different strategies for cooperation. For agency general counsels and attorneys, obviously more mundane forms of collaboration should be easier to formalize through interagency agreements. More complex and higher stakes coordination necessarily entails greater scrutiny and review.

#### **A. Varieties of Mechanisms for Collaboration**

Similar to variation in purpose, the mechanisms or processes used for cross-agency collaboration differ substantially. Unfortunately, these mechanisms do not map neatly onto the various purposes for collaboration. By contrast, most agencies will use a portfolio of different purposes and mechanisms or processes. As more collaboration across agencies occurs, general counsels and other attorneys within agencies may expand their own repertoire of agreement and negotiation categories to align with the type, risk, complexity and other dimensions of a collaborative initiative.

Traditionally, mechanisms for coordination include:

- face-to-face communication – interpersonal (emphasizes real-time, dynamic verbal exchange)
- roles – definite responsibilities; cross-boundary roles include coordinator, integrator, liaison, linker, boundary spanner (Some of these roles are to be played by the COO, PIO, PIC, OPPI, and goal leaders.)
- structure – command and control (vertical); task forces, teams, interagency groups (horizontal/flat/hierarchical); matrix structures (mixed)
- task characteristics/design of work – Are the key tasks sequential, parallel or concurrent, team-based? How characterize task complexity? How will task interdependencies be coordinated across agencies (handoffs, internal customers)? Reciprocal interdependencies imply the use of mutual adjustment; sequential interdependencies imply use of planning and scheduling; pooled interdependencies suggest the use of coordination through standardization. Task type matters.
- organizational design – Key dimensions include: degree of standardization and routinization – innovation and change demand customizable, adaptable, innovative design; routine, stable work and environment imply standardization (but one must still adapt to external change, e.g., technology, demographics, etc.)

- shared understanding – Shared understanding implies coordinated or shared norms, values, beliefs, logics of performance and decision-making. (This may have to be developed through face to face but may be sustained without intensive face to face work).
- processes – planning, control, information system management and other shared processes are critical to project management across agency boundaries

The approaches taken to cross-agency collaboration range from formal to informal, from strategies focused on vertical reporting relationships to an emphasis on horizontal governance, and, from policies that are primarily top down versus those that are bottom up, as well as from guidance that is fixed, or standardized, to more dynamic and emergent approaches that afford flexibilities as learning and experience accumulate. Table 1 below arrays these dimensions.

**Table 1: Organizational Mechanisms for Coordination**

Organizational Mechanisms for Coordination		
<b>formal</b>	↔	informal
<b>vertical</b>	↔	horizontal
<b>top-down</b>	↔	bottom-up
<b>fixed (standardized)</b>	↔	interactive, dynamic, emergent, customized

Source: Pederson, Sehested, and Sorenson, 2010.<sup>65</sup>

## B. Managing Collaboration Across Boundaries

Agencies can strengthen and sustain cross-agency collaboration by establishing eight tactics, widely recommended in the management literature, and enumerated by GAO in a review of mechanisms identified by research and practitioners, that, taken together, might comprise a strategy for working across boundaries effectively:

- Define and articulate clear goals
- Establish mutually reinforcing or joint strategies
- Identify and address needs by leveraging resources
- Agree on roles and responsibilities
- Establish compatible policies, procedures, and other means to operate across agency boundaries
- Develop mechanisms to monitor, evaluate and report on results
- Reinforce agency accountability for collaborative efforts through agency plans and reports
- Reinforce individual accountability through performance management systems.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Anne Reff Pedersen, Karina Sehested, and Eva Sorensen. “Emerging Theoretical Understandings of Pluricentric Coordination in Public Governance,” *American Review of Public Administration* 20(10) 2010, pp. 1-20.



GPRMA includes many of the pre-requisites for successful cross-agency collaboration within the statute. As this report has detailed, the law requires agencies to develop and describe clear goals including strategic and agency priority goals and to develop clear strategies for achieving stated goals. GPRAMA is silent regarding how two or more agencies would “establish mutually reinforcing or joint strategies.” Similarly, it does not specify how or with what tools agencies would come to agree on roles and responsibilities and “establish compatible policies, procedures and others means.” In fact, these details represent some of the vexing challenges to collaboration.

The statute does offer language related to the last three tactics for collaboration but again remains silent on how these would be developed across agencies. The use of goal leaders for the CAP goals who have considerable authority and influence is the primary means to build cooperation and break through conflicts among agencies and programs. Similarly, the attention of OPPM, the PIC, and, for APGs, the agency COO and PIO, would presumably serve to motivate actors to find solutions in order to collaborate.

### *1. Goal Clarity and Emphasis*

Clear goals are essential, but are not a panacea. The distortions in firm and industry behavior produced by myopic attention to short-term time horizons are well known. Similar distortions may be introduced in government performance and must be guarded against. Agencies may distort their activities by over-emphasis on some goals at the expense of other critical activities. It is well known that managers, in the public, private and non-profit sectors can strategically formulate goals for compliance rather than for strengthening performance. Agencies have broad missions that cannot be completely concentrated into narrow, specific goals. Agency managers might shift resources away from areas of nearly equal importance but not listed as priority goals. Public managers focus intensively on circumscribed short-term gains that sacrifice longer-term, more complex purposes. Objectives that are easier to quantify and achieve tend to be pursued sometimes even at the expense of more important objectives. Longer-term capacity building, including the development of human capital, succession planning, scanning to identify and respond to emerging issues are important but may often be overlooked. Short-term targets may substitute for broader strategic goals which may weaken a broader sense of agency mission and purpose. Strategically setting targets that appear challenging but are, in fact, easy to achieve is well documented in studies of performance management.<sup>67</sup>

### *2. Clarify Roles and Responsibilities*

Several officials interviewed for this study referred to their cross-agency projects as “virtual agencies.” In such virtual arrangements, roles and responsibilities cross formal jurisdictional lines and are enforced more by interagency agreement than by formal agency

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<sup>66</sup> GAO-06-15

<sup>67</sup> Among several critiques, see Beryl Radin, *supra*; and Lisa D. Ordóñez, Maurice E. Schweitzer, Adam D. Galinsky and Max H. Bazerman, “Goals Gone Wild: The Systematic Side Effects of Over-Prescribing Goal Setting,” Working Paper 09-083, Harvard Business School, 2009.

requirements. This makes the role of agency general counsels and attorneys critical in their willingness to craft interagency agreements that are timely and clear but flexible enough to account for necessary levels of discretion. Clear agreement about roles and responsibilities—the division of labor and responsibilities—is critical to negotiate. Specification of roles, tasks and responsibilities clarifies expectations, invites a discussion of decision-making authority, division of labor, and the details of dispute resolution. In virtual agencies, clear objectives and roles can de-emphasize power differentials among agencies. Similarly, inter-organizational network partners require shared performance evaluation processes and measures.

New and useful ideas can come from anywhere in the network. So designs that bring together different sources of expertise and experience are critical. As a manager from EPA with several years of experience building and managing a cross-agency project recommended:

Take the best ideas no matter where they come from in the network. Give every partner an equal vote. Give every partner a voice. It may be that this is necessary to build something new. But once the form and practices are developed for a particular type of network – for example, shared services or shared functional management across agencies – then a more top-down approach to “replicate” the collaborative network needed might work. I say “might” because collaboration will require joint commitment and joint problem solving, which take time and repeated interaction to develop.

### *3. Crafting Interagency Agreements*

In the federal government, cross-agency collaboration often is formalized using interagency agreements or memoranda of understanding (MOUs) among agencies, which must be developed, reviewed, and approved by agency general counsels and/or other agency attorneys as well as the principal program managers involved in the project. Interagency agreements are themselves an integrative activity and should be thought of as part of joint strategic planning processes in order to involve agency general counsels and attorneys early in the process. The act of specifying joint goals, processes, and systems should, but does not always, imply commitment to a joint effort and will require extensive communication and joint problem solving that may include bargaining.

The CAP goals and agency priority goals are formalized under GPRAMA, but nevertheless require interagency agreements, in many cases, to move forward. If such agreements take several years to negotiate, an entire project may be delayed. Research comparing business alliances and interagency agreements in government indicate that formalization in successful private sector network partnerships tends to decrease over time as trust and reputation develop, but this is not the case for government alliances, perhaps because of legal requirements rather than from lack of trust. But this contrast in research results is one example of the way in which business best practices must be translated for the institutional environment of government.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Ranjay Gulati. "Does Familiarity Breed Trust? the Implications of Repeated Ties for Contractual Choice in Alliances." *Academy of Management Journal* 38, (1995): 85-112; Gulati, Ranjay and Harbir Singh. "The

#### 4. *Developing Shared Operations*

As James March and Herbert Simon wrote long ago: “Organizational actors deal with each other by creating and using systems of rules, procedures and interpretations that store understanding in easily retrievable form.”<sup>69</sup> Cross-agency projects often begin by focusing on minimal overlap to begin to build shared operations which are clear to all parties. This shared space, often small at the outset of a partnership, can lead to further development of shared operational capacity. For example, the Exports CAP goal initiative combined greater cohesion in policymaking regarding exports with several, modest but important projects to develop shared operational space, such as: development and publication of brochures including material from multiple agencies; co-location of agency services in one building or office; and development of the shared website, Exports.gov. Small projects successfully concluded often lead to more ambitious endeavors as managers build trust and shared norms of interaction.

#### 5. *Leveraging Resources Amid Tight Budgets*

Resource adequacy is shaping the goals developed by agencies and the types of cross-agency projects that are. Consolidation of duplicative systems and processes is a priority, to the extent this “re-engineering” and integration can be done while managing risk. It is unlikely that new information systems will be developed if they are costly, risky and promise benefits only in the future. By contrast, leveraging existing resources in more efficient and effective ways forms the primary strategy for the near term. Lack of resources often hampers cross-agency efforts because they fail to align with traditional congressional committee concerns. Indeed, they may threaten traditional constituencies. Still, some cross-agency projects – some of which are described in the case studies in this report – have worked successfully with Congress to build support and sustained resources for cross-agency efforts, particularly when they are likely to save resources through joint activities. Development of shared services, government-wide systems, cloud computing resources and other advances hold promise to use scarce resources across agencies more wisely than in the past.

Agency general counsels and attorneys play a key role in development of interagency agreements and in rethinking past practices to conform better with the letter and spirit of GPRAMA in ways that facilitate and encourage cross-agency collaboration. The strong community of practice among agency attorneys can be a strong aid to the development and dissemination of new useful practices as experience with cross-agency projects continues to develop.

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Architecture of Cooperation: Managing Coordination Costs and Appropriation Concerns in Strategic Alliances.” *Administrative Science Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (1998): 781-814.

<sup>69</sup> James March and Herbert Simon, “Introduction to the Second Edition,” *Organizations*. (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1993 (2d edition), p. 2. Originally published in 1958.

### C. Management Skills for Cross-Agency Collaboration

GPRAMA requires OPM to develop a list of management skills required to support cross-agency collaboration.<sup>70</sup> The research base is clear as to the types of skills required. Many of those interviewed for this study noted that collaboration often hinges on “personalities.” Cross-agency collaborations require public managers—including agency general counsels and attorneys—with skill at negotiation, facilitation and brokering among individuals and agencies whose perspectives and interests overlap but differ substantially.<sup>71</sup> Effective cross-boundary capacity building requires individuals who can envision “the big picture” and who are skillful at framing, persuasion, negotiation, and other means for building shared understanding and commitment to a shared course of action. The skillset for collaborative policymaking and its implementation includes the ability to work with those whose perspectives differ, the capacity to build strong professional relationships, the ability to communicate effectively, and the confidence to take calculated risks as well as fairness, active listening and flexibility. A survey of more than 300 members of the Senior Executive Service found that “interpersonal skills” topped the list as a pre-requisite for building collaboration across agencies.<sup>72</sup>

Cross-agency projects typically establish cross-agency teams—working groups—that will develop and implement the details of the interagency objectives. A long line of research on effective teams finds that the following five conditions must hold: First, teams must have clear boundaries, interdependent members, and stable membership over time. Second, effective teams must have clear, compelling direction, which is focused on the goal to be achieved. Third, the team structure—the way it constructs its task, its composition and the core norms and processes that will be used—must facilitate the team’s work. Fourth, the resources and support required for the team to achieve its goal must be sufficient and available. Finally, a champion must be available to resolve difficulties, to engage new opportunities that may arise and to shepherd the project through major transitions.<sup>73</sup>

### D. Transaction and Coordination Costs

Cross-agency collaboration has been mandated under GPRAMA because of the potential benefits to the government in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and accountability to be gained from greater coordination across agency programs. But cross-agency collaboration is not free of costs nor is it simple. Many forms of coordination across boundaries, at least in the initial stages, can increase transaction and administrative costs substantially. Under GPRAMA, requirements for reporting, numerous reviews, etc. themselves can greatly increase the transaction and administrative costs of government although these costs remain invisible to performance

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<sup>70</sup> These issues are covered in greater detail in Fountain, 2013, *supra*.

<sup>71</sup> Early research on collaboration includes Robert Huggins. "Inter-Firm Network Policies and Firm Performance, Evaluating the Impact of Initiatives in the United Kingdom." *Research Policy* 30, no. 3 (2001): 443-458; James L. Hoel. *Cross-System Collaboration: Tools that Work*. Washington, D.C.: Child Welfare League of America, 1998; and Thomas J. Hoban. "Barriers to Interagency Cooperation." *Journal of Applied Sociology* 4, (1987): 13-29.

<sup>72</sup> Rosemary O'Leary and Catherine Gerard. *Collaboration across Boundaries: Insights and Tips from Federal Senior Executives*. IBM Center for the Business of Government, 2012.

<sup>73</sup> Ruth Wageman, Richard Hackman, and E. V. Lehman, 2004. "The Team Diagnostic Survey: Development of an instrument." Unpublished manuscript. <http://www.apa.org/science/about/psa/2004/06/hackman.aspx>

accounting systems.<sup>74</sup> This is not to say that reporting, reviews, and other elements of GPRAMA do not provide benefits; yet benefits should be viewed in light of a complete analysis of costs. Transaction and administrative costs can multiply with system size due to layering of statutory and regulatory rules and obligations, required paperwork, meetings, oversight requirements and related dimensions of policymaking systems. Furthermore, an agency may have only so much capacity to undertake collaborative efforts. The agency may need to prioritize how it uses its scarce staff resources and undertake only the collaboration opportunities with the highest net benefits, while leaving other positive-net-benefit opportunities unexploited.

Studies have examined executive decision-making and have found that as the number of people involved increases the synchronization of actors and units declines due to increases in transaction costs. Research on decision-making capacity in the EOP found that it declines as layers of staff and policy specialists increase beyond a certain optimum due to rises in coordination costs.<sup>75</sup>

As information technologies, problem complexity, the search for greater efficiency and simplification, and globalization have continued to grow, commensurately increasing attention has been drawn to developing decision-making and operations that lie across agency boundaries. Terms used include “boundaryless” organization and networks of organizations.<sup>76</sup> Other forms of government agency collaboration which lie outside the scope of this study, include public-private partnerships and citizen co-production of services.

## E. Section Summary

This section of the report has described principal varieties of cross-agency collaboration and the types of mechanisms organizations use to coordinate their activities and operations. It is focused on the conceptual level and draws from various research perspectives. While these perspectives lay the groundwork for examining cross-agency collaboration, they miss the

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<sup>74</sup> See Ronald Coase, “The Nature of the Firm,” *Economica* 4(16) 1937, pp. 386-405; Oliver Williamson, “The Economics of Governance,” *American Economic Review* 95(2) May 2005, pp. 1-18.

<sup>75</sup> George A. Krause, “The Secular Decline in Presidential Domestic Policy Making: An Organizational Perspective,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 34(4): 79-92, 2004; Andrew Rudalevige, “The Structure of Leadership: Presidents, Hierarchies, and Information Flow,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 35(2): 333-60, 2005.

<sup>76</sup> Jesse D. Lacy, Ines A. Mergel, and Hans Peter Schmitz, “Networks in Public Administration,” *Public Management Review*, 2013; David Lazer et al., “The Multiple Institutional Logics of Innovation,” *International Public Management Journal* 14(3): 311-340, 2011; Kimberley R. Isett et al., “Networks in Public Administration Scholarship: Understanding Where We Are and Where We Need to Go,” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 21: 157-173, 2011; Ron Ashkenas, Dave Ulrich, and Steve Kerr, *The Boundaryless Organization: Breaking the Chains of Organization Structure*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995; David Singh Grewal, *Network Power: The Social Dynamics of Globalization*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008; Tony Bovaird, “Beyond Engagement and Participation: User and Community Coproduction of Public Services,” *Public Administration Review* 67(5): 846-60, 2007; Taco Brandsen and Victor Pestoff, “Co-Production, the Third Sector and the Delivery of Public Services: An Introduction,” *Public Management Review* 8(4): 493-501, 2006; Joel Podolny and Karen L. Page, “Network Forms of Organization,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 24: 57-76, 1998; Walter W. Powell, “Neither Market nor Hierarchy: Network Forms of Organization,” pp. 295-336 in *Research in Organizational Behavior*, vol. 12, ed. by Barry M. Staw and L. L. Cummings. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1990; Keith G. Provan and H. Brinton Milward, “Do Networks Really Work? A Framework for Evaluating Public-Sector Organizational Networks,” *Public Administration Review* 61(4): 441-23, 2001.

complex, dynamic, political and institutional context within which agencies in the federal government operate. In a profound sense, the institutional underpinnings of U.S. federal government design—primarily shared power between the president and Congress, and within Congress, the authorizations and appropriations processes and the practices that flow from them—strongly work against cross-agency collaboration. The next section of this report sets forth some of the primary institutional challenges that government officials face in trying to coordinate activities across agency boundaries.

### VIII. INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES TO CROSS-AGENCY COLLABORATION

Paradoxically, the provisions of GPRAMA requiring interagency collaboration arise out of an institutional environment seemingly designed to inhibit too-easy interagency coordination.<sup>77</sup> Government and public administration scholars have written extensively on the Framers' original intent to check power and the resultant fragmentation of agency behavior. Alasdair Roberts has described fragmentation as a core institutional feature of the design of American government.<sup>78</sup> Eugene Bardach has written: "Political and institutional pressures on public sector agencies in general push for differentiation rather than integration, and the basis for differentiation is typically political rather than technical."<sup>79</sup>

A 2013 National Academy of Sciences report on sustainability laments the difficulties of crafting cross-agency responses to inherently crosscutting challenges:

In their efforts to ensure sufficient fresh water, food, energy, housing, health, and education while maintaining ecosystems and biodiversity for future generations, federal agencies discover that, for a variety of reasons, they are not well organized to address the crosscutting nature of sustainability challenges. Moreover, these crosscuts are often the crucial points where progress can be made ...<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> This discussion of institutional challenges draws from and substantially updates and revises Fountain, 2013, *supra*.

<sup>78</sup> Alasdair Roberts, writing recently among a very long line of research, observes the political bases of fragmented institutions in the federal government: "[T]he American system of governance was designed with the aim of fragmenting authority and confounding efforts to 'coordinate production.' It was intended to be a constrained state, built to promote virtues of economic and political liberalism rather than collective security." The institutional features of the federal government – statutes, regulations, procedures, processes, culture – drive toward differentiation and away from integration. Intractable problems of coordination in policy challenges of extraordinary consequence and moment – such as 9/11 and Katrina – imply the far greater difficulties of coordination when agencies are dealing with challenges of less severity and impact. Alasdair Roberts, *The Limits of Control: The Market State, Divided Power, and the Response to 9/11*, *International Public Management Journal* 9(3): 313-32, 2006.

<sup>79</sup> Eugene Bardach, *Getting Agencies to Work Together*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution. 1998. See also Lisa Bingham. *The Next Generation of Administrative Law: Building the Legal Infrastructure for Collaborative Governance*. *Wisconsin Law Review* 1:297-356. 2010.

Dorothy M. Daley, *Interdisciplinary problems and agency boundaries: Exploring effective cross-agency collaboration*. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 19 (3):477-493. 2009.

<sup>80</sup> National Research Council of the National Academies, *Committee on Sustainability Linkages in the Federal Government, Science and Technology for Sustainability Program, Policy and Global Affairs Division, Sustainability for the Nation: Resource Connections and Governance Linkages*. 2013, p. 1.

Following from the Framers' efforts to avoid the defects of centralized power in a monarchy and to establish a system where enumerated legislative powers are vested in Congress and checked by a President's veto and executive powers, laws and regulations specify "the rules of the game," and the incentive structure for departments and agencies that in turn influence the behavior of government officials. Within the executive branch, heads of departments may compete for control over policy among each other and with White House staff. Similarly, the structure of congressional committees and subcommittees fragments legislative jurisdiction and oversight of cross-agency efforts.<sup>81</sup> Several laws prohibit specific agencies from sharing data with other agencies to protect personal privacy or national security. Legislation requires agencies to secure the permission of Congress before developing shared interagency budgets for joint projects or operations.<sup>82</sup> Formal contracts usually specify performance criteria, dispute resolution mechanisms, and some of the ways that government actors will be expected to interact, including written disclosures, notices of intent, verbal representations, and the like. In short, contracts and other written agreements describe and prescribe the structures and processes of information flows. Clearly, institutions circumscribe the environment for cross-agency collaboration in the federal government and specify many of the ways those collaborations will be designed and managed. Legal impediments can stop or slow the forward motion of interagency working groups. At times, these impediments were intended. At other times, their effects may be unintended. To counteract strong agency-centric tendencies, interagency collaboration often moves forward as part of a presidential agenda with strong support and coordination from OMB, the White House, or other executive offices, or in response to a crisis.

At least four institutional processes serve as constraints to cross-agency collaboration, for good or ill, depending upon specific circumstances. From a congressional perspective, the processes may constrain a president and executive agencies from diverging from the public good. These institutional processes include:

- Silos and stovepipes, the vertical structure of bureaucracy, encoded in the authorizations process
- Agency-centric appropriations and rules regarding use of funds
- Legislation that introduces contradictions within and across agencies
- Agency-centric accountability amid shared jurisdictional space

#### **A. Authorization: Producing Silos and Stovepipes**

Agencies are circumscribed in their actions by their authorizations from Congress. While the scope of authority may differ from one statute to another, agencies may only operate within their legislative mandate. Typically, authorizing legislation focuses on a single issue and ignores (and in fact, impedes) connections across issues. Yet it is observed that: "Nonetheless, within this complex institutional context and statutory provisions, there is often delegated discretion and

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<sup>81</sup> See Beryl Radin. *Federal Management Reform in a World of Contradictions*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press. 2012.

<sup>82</sup> This section is based on Jane Fountain, 2007.

hence maneuverability—so-called “white space”—for creative or innovative individuals and agencies.”<sup>83</sup>

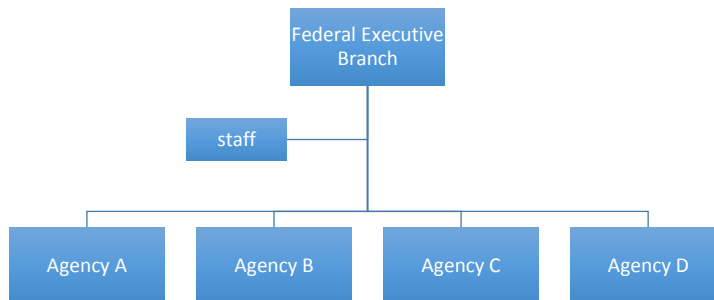
Throughout much of the 20th century, bureaucracies had well-defined jurisdiction and authority ordered through a clear chain of command. Max Weber, one of the fathers of the concept of bureaucracy, argued that it was the only form of organization capable of coordination and control in industrializing societies.<sup>84</sup> Traditional bureaucratic design is deeply institutionalized in the U.S. government, exhibited by relatively autonomous government agencies accountable to specific congressional committees and subcommittees.

Collaborative governance, networks across agencies, and other cross-boundary arrangements are layered over traditional bureaucratic organizations. They do not replace them. Over the past 30 years, public managers and management experts have sought to forge more flexible, innovative, and productive forms under the overarching framework of traditional bureaucracy. Markets and increased use of contracting provide one alternative; networks, partnerships, and collaboration provide another. Yet the basic structure of bureaucracy persists—and with good reason.<sup>85</sup>

In the schematic drawings below (Figures A-1 to A-3), the traditional hierarchical model is sketched as part of an organization chart with boxes representing autonomous departments (Figure A-1). A limited form of collaboration is sketched using slightly overlapping ovals to represent overlapping goals and business processes across agencies (Figure A-1). The third, a network diagram, is an actual depiction of the connections among 25 Bush administration cross-agency projects. It gives a starkly different view, emphasizing connection rather than separation (Figure A-1).

### FROM SILOS TO NETWORKS - DEPICTING CROSS-AGENCY COLLABORATION

**Figure A- 1: Traditional hierarchical structure: agency autonomy**



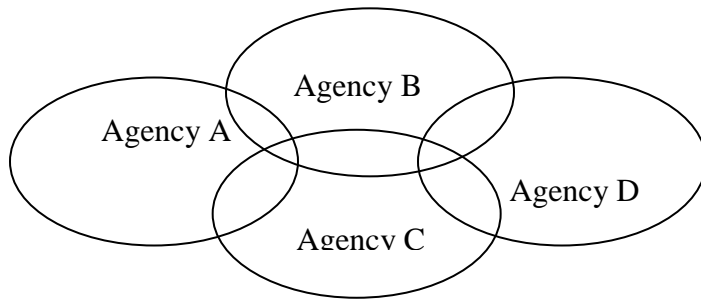
<sup>83</sup> NAS, Sustainability for the Nation, *supra*, p. 27. The report also notes authorizing legislation that is specifically cross-agency in its focus on sustainability and the need for linkage across agencies. See the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), citing NAS, Sustainability for the Nation, *supra*, pp. 91-92.

<sup>84</sup> Note that bureaucracy here refers not to red tape but to an organizational form.

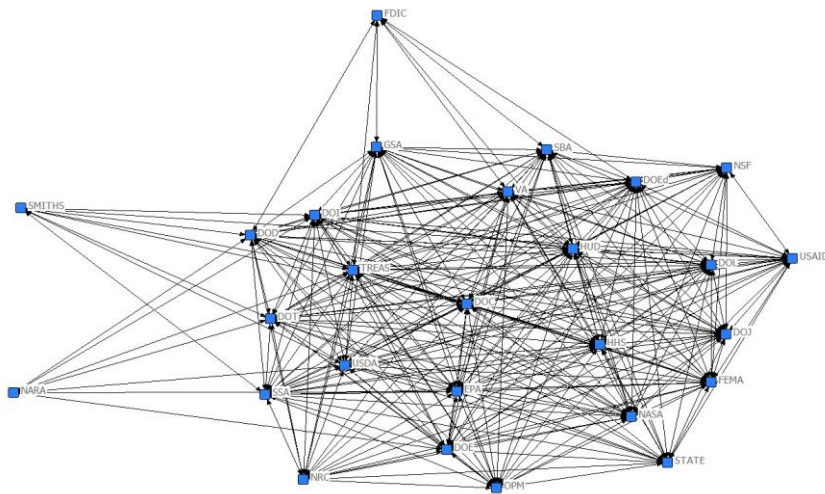
<sup>85</sup> For a related discussion, see Donald Kettl, “Managing Boundaries: The Collaboration Imperative,” *Public Administration Review*, 2006. Re: Weberian bureaucracy, see Jane Fountain, “Toward a Theory of Federal Bureaucracy in the 21st Century.” In *Governance. com: Democracy in the Information Age*, eds. E. Kamarck and J. S. Nye, Jr. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press. 2001



**Figure A- 2: Overlapping goals, processes and systems**



**Figure A- 3: Cross-Agency Collaboration as Networked Governance**



Source: Fountain 2013.<sup>86</sup>

To move from one model to another, a public manager must decide to achieve at least some goals through cross-agency cooperation. To do this, decision-makers must be able to imagine a positive-sum calculation (win-win), rather than viewing decisions as zero-sum calculations in which one department's gain is another's loss. Institutionally, for cross-agency collaboration to work, systems of accountability, budgeting, and legislation have to be aligned to allow for shared jurisdiction, resources, and operations.

<sup>86</sup> This figure was developed by the author and previously published in J. E. Fountain, 2013 *supra*. The network figure shows cross-agency ties for each of the Bush Administration e-government cross-agency projects.

The main structural barrier to collaboration is the departmental model (Model A), an enduring feature of the modern federal government. Central oversight agencies can use control measures to promote interdepartmental collaboration, but such an approach runs counter to a tradition of agency autonomy. As a key executive branch oversight and management agency, OMB has played an increasing role in shaping incentives to promote cross-agency collaboration. Over time, it has expanded its relationship with agencies as controller to include that of facilitator and knowledge-broker in an effort to catalyze, rather than simply to order, more collaboration across agencies. If oversight bodies could simply order cooperation, they would do so—and in fact have done so with varying success. But the information and incentive structures to support interagency collaboration are too complex to yield to simple fiat, even from legitimate authorities.

## **B. Appropriations, Acquisitions and Agency Use of Funds**

A former senior officer at OMB interviewed for this study focused on his perception of barriers to collaboration posed by dimensions of the appropriations process:

The appropriations process is one of the greatest barriers to cross-agency collaboration. Programs are very hard to affect one way or the other. So you have a lot of legacy programs that are on auto pilot. New more fragile programs are only linked to congressional subcommittees by the nature of the constituency of the member. Any one program has to be self-sufficient in a member's eyes. When you lock in this political need for self-sufficiency based on constituent support politically you lock out collaboration.

Several constraints on collaboration are posed by restrictions on the use of funds under the federal budget system. Article I, § 8 of the Constitution makes it clear that only Congress has authority to raise revenue and to appropriate funds for the programs and activities of federal agencies. Under the Purpose Statute, Congress must authorize and fund any agency obligation (e.g., a contract or legal liability to pay) or expenditure (outlay). Even the Department of Defense cannot provide support to other agencies or organization without affirmative congressional authority. In addition:

Under the Purpose Statute, 31 U.S.C. § 1301(a) (2002), obligations and expenditures must be for a proper “purpose”—that is, necessary and incident to the purpose of a congressional appropriation, not prohibited by law, and not provided for in another congressional appropriation. Obligations and expenditures also must occur within the time limits specified within the appropriation (for instance, the generic military operations appropriation is available for one fiscal year before another appropriation is needed) and must be within the amounts specified in the appropriation.<sup>87</sup>

A former senior official from OIRA, interviewed for this study, observed the ways in which agency strategic behavior conforms to these incentive systems:

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<sup>87</sup> Source: CLAMO report, p. 166, n301.

[Agencies generally think about what] your oversight committee will accept. [They will say] the appropriations committee will never stand for our spending money on this because it's outside our jurisdiction. ... They don't like to go outside their areas. ... you don't want to [upset] your appropriations people and your oversight people. So you work on what you say you're going to do. [In cross-agency efforts] the agencies will slow roll it unless there's someone carrying water for this [in the White House or at OMB.]

Sponsorship of government-wide websites like USASpending.gov offer an example of shared project expenses. The holder of the site is GSA and there is a mechanism for contracts and acquisition, specifically an MOU with each agency that supports USASpending.gov. An interviewee from GSA who helped develop and manage USASpending.gov notes the tensions between having many different funders and the cohesion required in governance and decision-making to manage and provide development enhancements to a government-wide system.

The Integrated Acquisitions System, also developed and managed largely by the GSA in consultation with and for other agencies, is funded through interagency agreements with each of the many agencies that use the system. This funding system offers possibilities for proportional funding according to agree upon criteria such as agency size or volume of use of the system. But the funding plan also sometimes gives rights through a shared governance structure to at least the major payers of the system. While shared governance may increase opportunities for influence, the effect of many possibly conflicting interests in design and development can lead to suboptimal outcomes.

Other examples of use of a variety of shared funding arrangements include many of the Bush Administration cross-agency e-government projects – most of which continue to operate in one form or another. For Regulations.gov, a platform managed by EPA to host a searchable, indexible site for all regulations and associated public comment, a MOU was developed at the outset of the project and agreed to by the agencies that use Regulations.gov. Each agency is charged a fee, according to a formula based on agency size and usage, and accordingly, each contributes a portion of the cost. These types of MOUs have been arduous to develop and to enforce, particularly when they require transfers of funds across agencies.

A current OMB official remarked in an interview that “lack of dedicated coordination capacity is a massive barrier ... and the rigidity of funding and appropriations ... are fragmenting devices. Everyone wants to embed capacity in silos, and there's limited ability to move funding across different buckets or even to manage across buckets. They just don't have the capacity to do it.”

John Kamensky, in an interview for this study, recalled the interagency budget authority issue during the Clinton Administration. He noted: “In the National Performance Review, we created an interagency task force, sponsored by one agency, the Department of Defense, who gave the task force a budget.”

The Economy Act<sup>88</sup> gives authority to agencies to “order goods and services from each other.” Under this law, an agency or major organization unit within it may order goods or services from another agency if: the agency or unit head decides that the order is in the best interest of the federal government; the goods or services cannot be provided less expensively or as conveniently by a business; funds are available; and the agency or unit that will fill the order is able to provide the goods or services either directly or through a contract with another entity.<sup>89</sup> The Federal Acquisitions Regulation (FAR) guides and directs agency spending for acquisitions.<sup>90</sup> It is separate and distinct from the Economy Act.<sup>91</sup>

Shared resources form a significant source of cohesion for interagency collaboration, in part because they change the nature of the relationship from multiple exchanges to a shared system. In fact, researchers have found that the amount of resources shared by the group is one of the determinants of partnership effectiveness. (It is not clear, however, whether the shared resources are the cause or an effect of collaboration.)

By contrast, the federal budget system traditionally has restricted the use of funds in ways that constrain interagency collaboration. More generally, in most industrialized democracies, the budget process is organized to authorize and appropriate funds to individual departments for department-specific programs reinforcing the vertical structure of government.<sup>92</sup> In fact, as cross-agency collaborative initiatives began to develop during the past decade, Congress has enacted laws, at times at the instigation of agencies themselves, to prohibit federal agencies from developing shared interagency budgets without advance permission from Congress.

Federal acquisition laws rely on and thus usually require competitive bidding for acquisition of goods and services.<sup>93</sup> A recent National Academy of Science study noted: “The

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<sup>88</sup> 31 U.S.C. § 1535 (2000).

<sup>89</sup> *Id.* at 1535(a).

<sup>90</sup> GENERAL SERVS. ADMIN. ET AL., FEDERAL ACQUISITION REG. 2.101 (Sept. 2001) *available at* [http://www.acquisition.gov/Far/current/html/Subpart%202\\_1.html](http://www.acquisition.gov/Far/current/html/Subpart%202_1.html).

<sup>91</sup> Treasury, Financial Management Service, FMS Form 7600C (July 2010) is the standard Interagency Agreement (IAA) form. It includes two sections – the General Terms and Conditions (GT&C) Section and the Order Requirements and Funding Information (Order) Section. “It is the standard form to be used government-wide for all reimbursable agreements at the trading partner level, including, but not limited to: agreements between agencies, agreements within agencies, grant-related agreements, and assisted acquisitions.” Financial Management Service, “*IAA Form and Instructions*” *available at* <http://www.fms.treas.gov/finstandard/forms.html>. Other statutory authorities for orders of goods and services between agencies beyond the Economy Act include: the Government Management Reform Act (GMRA) - 31 U.S.C. § 502; the Franchise Fund - P.L. 103-356, Sec. 403; the Acquisition Services Fund – P.L. 109-313, updated 6-April-09; and Federal Prison Industries - 18 U.S.C. §§ 4121-4128. “If specific authority does not exist for a transaction, the default legal authority will probably be the Economy Act.” Subpart 17.5 (b) Interagency Acquisitions Under the Economy Act. *available at* [http://www.acquisition.gov/far/html/Subpart%2017\\_5.html](http://www.acquisition.gov/far/html/Subpart%2017_5.html).

<sup>92</sup> Eugene Bardach and Cara Lesser. “Accountability in Human Services Collaboratives—For What? and to Whom?” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 6, no. 2 (1996): 197–224; Allen et al. 2001

<sup>93</sup> “See Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 2.101, 35.003...266 and 41 U.S.C. 2302-2213 (1994) and Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1979 (31 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.). For guidance on the use of cooperative agreements and challenges to using such agreements, see DOI Office of Inspector General, 2007. “Proper Use of Cooperative Agreements Could Improve Interior’s Initiatives for Collaborative Partnerships.” Report No. W-IN-MOA-0086-2004. For implementation guidance, see OMB. 1978. “Implementation of the Federal Grant and

provisions may be appropriate to ensure best value for federal dollars when purchasing big ticket items, but may not be well suited to implementing multiparty, multi-issue, consensus-based partnership activities, where an expenditure of funds is an integral ingredient.” The study continues: “In these cases, in providing funding to a partner, the federal government is not purchasing a good or service but rather working with the partner to provide a public good. There are tools such as cooperative agreements available for use in these partnerships, but the circumstances in which such agreements can be used are both unclear and limited in some circumstances.”<sup>94</sup>

In an interview, an OMB executive with organizational responsibilities to implement provisions of GPRAMA noted possibilities to introduce greater flexibilities:

I’m also interested in ... are there changes to transfer authorities ... the Economy Act is very limiting. The expenditure must be clearly for the benefit of the purchasing agency. The interagency councils are funded with the \$17 million – to stand up the PIC and the councils. But there is not a transfer authority that would allow [for more flexible use of the funds to support cross-agency projects.]

A former top executive at OMB during the Bush Administration who was interviewed for this study, additionally noted:

We didn’t see Sarbanes-Oxley coming -- when they figured out you can’t manage financially when every agency and program has a different ledger, financial management system, etc. which leads to risk that Sarbanes-Oxley addressed. The government said that if you are a CFO entity, you have to get rid of silos and restructure around your customers. But the government is not doing this for itself. Our programs have become like GM with all of these redundant programs. It’s not the authorizers that maintain them, it’s the appropriations structure that doesn’t have a way to extract benefits through jointness. At the same time the agencies are necessarily parochial. It’s use it or lose it money.

### C. Disjointed and Sedimented Legislation

In recent years, legislators have mandated agencies and programs to cooperate in order to achieve public ends. In fact, interagency relationships, including intergovernmental arrangements, have been written into legislation throughout the nation’s history.<sup>95</sup> To be sure, legislation often mandates agency behavior without providing needed authority or resources. In other cases,

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Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977. Federal Register 43 (161): 36860 and OMB Circulars.” Cited from NAS, *Sustainability for the Nation*, *supra*, pp. 28-29, n6.

<sup>94</sup> NAS, *Sustainability for the Nation*, 2013, p. 29, including note 7.

<sup>95</sup> See, for example, Daniel Elazar, *The American Partnership: Intergovernmental Cooperation in the Nineteenth Century*. University of Chicago Press, 1962; Thad E. Hall and Laurence J. O’Toole, “Structures for Policy Implementation: An Analysis of National Legislation, 1965-66 and 1993-94.” *Administration & Society* 31:6 (2000): 667-86; Hall and O’Toole, “Shaping Formal Networks through the Regulatory Process,” *Administration & Society* 36:2 (2004): 186-207.

legislation reinforces or specifically requires agency autonomy. In general, layers of legislations accumulate over time fostering different logics of policymaking and action in agencies.<sup>96</sup>

Law and legitimacy are closely related, so cross-agency collaborative performance requires new forms of institutional legitimacy, typically encoded in law or regulation. In many cases of collaboration, informal negotiations, planning, and actual collaborative practices proceed before formal authority and arrangements change to accommodate them.<sup>97</sup>

Conflicting legislation must often be brought to bear on a policy problem. Policies related to federal lands offer an example: “Executive Branch policy has been made clear through Executive Order in effect for several decades<sup>98</sup> that all activities on federal land are subject to all applicable federal and state laws and regulations. In these cases, agencies may be limited to activities prescribed in statutes, such as one-size-fits-all approaches that may not be in line with sustainability efforts.”<sup>99</sup>

The Executive branch as well tends to layer frameworks and requirements over time. An agency attorney at the Department of Interior, interviewed for this study, observed wryly:

One of my frustrations is every group of people comes up with a grand new approach for how to make things run better. Nobody goes back and gleans out what was the useful stuff. So this will sit on the books [for many generations]. You had Gore’s reinventing government, then something else. Nobody says, let’s clean it all out and start over.

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<sup>96</sup> See, J. E. Fountain, “Disjointed Innovation: The Political Economy of Digitally Mediated Institutional Reform,” NCDG working paper, 2011. Eric Schickler, in a detailed study of institutional change in the U.S. Congress, used the term “disjointed pluralism” to conceptualize “institutions as multilayered historical composites that militate against any overarching order in ... politics.” Schickler argues that political actors “layer,” that is, they “add new institutional mechanisms without dismantling preexisting institutions and without rationalizing the structure as a whole.” This layering results in a sedimentation of rules, processes and other institutional arrangements that are “more haphazard than the product of some overarching plan” (Schickler 2001:15-18). A broader account of such layering and disjunctures is provided in Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time*, Yale University Press, 2004 and in Kathleen Thelen, “How Institutions Evolve: Insights from Comparative-Historical Analysis,” in J. Mahoney and D. Reuschemeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge University Press, 2003.

<sup>97</sup> Maria Christina Binz-Scharf, David Lazer and Ines Mergel, “Searching for Answers: Networks of Practice among Public Administrators,” *The American Review of Public Administration* 42(2) 202-225, 2012; Sharon S. Dawes and Lise Prefontaine. “Understanding New Models of Collaboration for Delivering Government Service.” *Communications of the ACM* 46, no. 1 (2003): 40-42; Kenneth Kernaghan. “Integrated Service Delivery: Beyond the Barriers.” Prepared for the Chief Information Officer, Government of Canada, 2003. Kernaghan reports in the results of a study of integrated service delivery projects in Canada that “legislative and regulatory barriers are of the show-stopper variety and require political consent for their removal. It is clear, for example, that privacy acts restrict the sharing of some kinds of data” (17–18).

<sup>98</sup> Executive Order 13148, “Greening the Government through Leadership in Environmental Management (2000) and EO 13514, “Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy and Economic Performance (2009), cited in NAS, *Sustainability for the Nation*, *supra*, p. 28, n3.

<sup>99</sup> Quotation from NAS, *supra*, p. 28. NAS, *supra*, p. 28, n4: “One notable exception is for border security infrastructure, in which the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security was given special statutory authority to waive all other laws in implementing the provisions of the act.”

The Obama Administration has recently required agencies to conduct regulatory “lookbacks” to root out unnecessary and competing regulations. But Congress rarely conducts such exercises, except when legislation is intended to update or clarify previous statutes. More often, new statutes are layered on top of old without reconciling contradictions. Worse, statutes developed in different congressional committees and subcommittees rarely consider contradictions that may be introduced when statutes from different committees and subcommittees must be jointly interpreted and implemented.

One interviewee noted that a cacophony of threshold criteria for benefits has grown over time. Dollar thresholds differ from one program to another: “... Congress doesn’t think about [consistency across statutes]. They say ‘let’s make a new benefit’ and they negotiate the criteria. They don’t know what’s outside their jurisdiction. And they don’t care. The agencies are helpless when there are statutory constraints.” Several experts interviewed raised the challenges of conflicting and competing legislative requirements and noted the particular trial of collaborating on terms and practices that are specifically, although often unintendedly, differentiated by statute.

Stepping back from the experiences of executive branch officials, however, these examples may reflect an executive branch perspective. Congress clearly attempted to bring functions together when they established the Department of Homeland Security. The Goldwater-Nichols Act was intended to build “jointness” at the Department of Defense. Recent reforms in intelligence reflect concern for cross-boundary communication and coordination on the part of Congress. So the situation is more complex than one might gather initially.

#### **D. Agency-Centric versus Shared Accountability and Risk**

The traditional concept of accountability in bureaucracies maintains that clear, agency-centric accountability provides the most transparent and clearest means to ensure accountability of agencies and programs to their oversight agencies and to authorizing and appropriations committees and subcommittees in Congress. But, increasingly, this traditional view fails to align with the types of cross-cutting policy challenges that governments are as obligated to address. An OMB official, interviewed for this study commented:

It’s getting to the point that the silos are *decreasing* responsibility because the problems demand many different agencies. So agencies are off the hook when they have just done their own agency’s due diligence.

In traditional bureaucratic conceptions of the federal government, accountability flows directly from the vertical structure of bureaucracy. An agency director is directly accountable to Congress for the actions of his or her agency. Underlying the traditional concept of departmental accountability is the assumption that one organization, and its leader, are responsible for one policy—or that every policy is the responsibility of just one organization. The idea flows from the supposed clarity of bureaucratic organization and hierarchical accountability. The law typically assigns specific and unique responsibility for implementing a policy to one organization. Moreover, in this view one should be able to identify precisely the individual responsible for each program within an agency. Thus one individual is ultimately accountable for each component of a policy.

Cross-agency collaboration blurs lines of authority and accountability. Public managers are challenged when asked to maintain vertical accountability in their agency activities while supporting horizontal or networked initiatives for which lines of accountability are less direct and clear. The risk in interagency arrangements is not the same as the risk involved in contracting out to private entities because a contract clearly delineates the requirements imposed on the contractor and the penalties for failure to perform. But interagency collaborative arrangements, until recently, have rarely clarified division of labor, authority, and responsibility in such detail. Moreover, the developing stages of interagency collaboration typically require public managers to engage in experimentation, trial and error, and provisional systems as a group of decision-makers negotiates and learns what will work in their context. As implemented during the past few decades, in some cross-agency collaborations either the lead agency, the managing partner or, more recently with respect to CAP goals, OPPM and EOP executives, have been accountable for the performance of a network of agencies and programs.

In spite of these challenges, for nearly 30 years, a cadre of federal public managers has gained practical experience with the development of sustainable cross-agency operations. Although pockets of good practice have developed, institutional systems and policies to support inter-agency collaboration have lagged behind.<sup>100</sup>

#### **E. Data and Information Sharing Across Agencies**

Underlying nearly every instance of cross-agency collaboration is shared data and information. In a digital age, given the obvious ability to share data “anytime, anywhere,” statutes, rules and practices developed for a paper-based government seem increasingly out of sync with the way government officials and the citizens they serve behave and coordinate. Many of the impediments to collaboration lie in data definitions that are not (yet) harmonized. In previous administrations, emphasis was on integrating computer and information systems. But the current emphasis on data reveals how discrepancies in data definitions and usage can challenge collaborative efforts.

A data specialist working with PIC, interviewed for this study, commented: “What people seem to be doing in the Obama Administration is trying to use data transparency – through dashboards, other visualization and tools -- to get managers and agencies to look at data. This is about data, not about systems ... The first step is to standardize how we track what we’re trying to achieve. ... Security is managed differently in each agency system. [By contrast:] You have 100 people in 10 agencies processing homeless veterans, for example, but they’re using several

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<sup>100</sup> Barbara Allen et al. “E-Government as Collaborative Governance: Structural, Accountability and Cultural Reform.” In *Practicing E-Government: A Global Perspective*, edited by Mehdi Khosrow-Pour. New York: Idea Group, 2005, 1–15; Donald G. Lenihan, et al. *What is Shared Accountability? Policy, Politics and Governance*. Vol 5. Ottawa, Ontario: KTA Centre for Collaborative Government, 2003; Craig Millar and Daniel Rubenstein. *Government Response to the Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans: Report on the Oceans Act*. Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Government of Canada, 2002; Peter Wilkins. “Accountability and Joined Up Government.” *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 61:1 (2002), 114–119; Fountain 2001, *supra*.



systems that include a workflow through those various systems and an ability to see what agency has the ball and lots of different dashboards. That's when you see examples of the process.”

Another interviewee from GSA said:

There is a natural culture that is starting to change. Program offices own the data. This is the traditional view. They mean ‘we will grant access to you.’ Open data is shifting to managing data as an organizational asset that is publicly accessible. Shifting a culture from ‘ownership as [controlling] access’ to ‘data as an asset’ means you have to convince the program offices that ownership doesn’t equal access control, but that you have accountability to make your data public and accessible. In most cases, people default to ‘this can’t be made public.’

This perception that data cannot be made public or shared across agencies, while sometimes legitimate, often is a perceived legal barrier to cross-agency collaboration. This is an area where agency attorneys can examine actual versus perceived legal challenges to opening and sharing data. The current administration has been clear that the presumption should be toward openness and sharing.

OMB officials cautioned that the introduction of large data harmonization projects could “fall of their own weight” and produce suboptimal results. They counseled that attention to feasible, focused outcome-oriented goals is likely to produce better performance results. While data harmonization may be necessary for collaboration across boundaries, it does not ensure that collaboration will happen.

An official from GSA in charge of data for the PIC, when interviewed, reported that:

There is little guidance on data definition standards. The Open Data [initiative] pushed for more datasets to be published by agencies. But they’re not saying you should definitely include these data elements. They are also not going to agencies and saying you should include these data elements. OMB is letting agencies decide what to publish. When there are program areas that overlap, the data is reported and defined inconsistently. They are not required to self-define and work across agencies ... Some of the longer term plan may be to refine these things.

An OMB official with a central role in the cross-agency capacity building had this to say: “We’ve been stuck at the mess of data standardization. This is something I’ve been burned on a little. Unless you can do this right, you get burned. Lack of interoperability and lack of data standards have caused a lot of frustration. We think there should be some effort to further standardization.” The official thinks standardization is needed but he’s nervous about it because when he costs it out and really estimates what it would take to transition systems, he gets nervous about the price tag. The official said: Given where the government is right now, if he had to hire 10 people to do data standards or 10 people to work directly on projects with a focus on achieving a clear, measurable goal, he would definitely put those people on direct projects. The OMB official specifically noted: “anything that takes multiple phases and then, as a result, is

supposed to lead to more interagency collaboration, is much more risky. I would go right to the collaboration.”

When differing definitions of terms are encoded in different statutes, it is not possible for two or more agencies to harmonize or standardize terminology or definitions with statutory changes. It may be possible for them to negotiate an understanding or agreement or language that will encompass both definitions.

A data specialist working with the PIC, when interviewed, said: “We’ve talked ... about developing a web-based application for applicants. [For example] someone could say, ‘I want to build a bridge in Missouri,’ and they fill in one application and all the information goes to all the agencies that need the information. [We can do this technologically] but the ingrained culture of how we do business would never let that work. While the technology exists it is not politically feasible.”

#### **F. Human Capital: Goal Leaders and Cross-Agency Professionals**

An array of personnel rules, incentives, and laws are built on the implicit notion that personnel will remain in one department or agency and will not interact at an integrative level with counterparts in other agencies. Of perhaps more importance is where exactly authority for cross-agency decisions and plans will reside. What capacity will be developed in OMB? Where should goal leaders for large cross-agency projects “reside”?

During the past three administrations, the proper level and role of the “goal leader” in cross-agency efforts has been experimented with. During the Clinton Administration, leaderless and self-managing cross-agency working groups were formed with mixed results. During the Bush Administration, “lead programs,” with goal leaders located within the lead agency were used to make authority clearer. During the Obama Administration, the CAP goal leaders are drawn from appointees in the EOP rather than from agencies. While this provides top-level support and perspective, it is a subject of some debate. Of note is the relationship of the goal leader to Congress and to oversight by Congress. What are the implications for cross-agency collaboration? This is one of several dimensions to consider.

Related to the above, questions important to answer are the types of authorities given to cross-agency goal leaders. GPRAMA does not give any new authorities to cross-agency goal leaders and is equally silent about authorities for COO, PIOs, PIC, and others. An interviewee with experience of the Clinton Administration National Performance Review, John Kamensky, noted that the NPR encouraged project leads to seek waivers from their agencies specifically to authorize them to work through rules that might impede development of virtual agencies. In addition, when executive staff were developing the HUB zones in HUD, a major administration priority, they created an expedited waiver process so that if one agency’s rules conflicted with those of another agency, there would be a vehicle to waive the rules. In the HUB zone case, they created a HUB zone council to resolve conflicts.

For example, the CAP goal leader for the Exports goal is the Assistant to the President for Economic Advice for Exports. While the role affords a top-level perspective and access,

other dimensions of the role are less clear. What is the goal leader's authority for CAP goal and agency-level crosscutting goal leadership? Some experienced government experts have asked whether it is appropriate for White House staff to lead cross-agency projects and whether it would be better for project leaders to hold a senior position within an agency. It is expeditious to have White House support to face challenges to cross-agency collaboration. It is also useful for projects not to be viewed as "owned" by a particular agency. The leadership authorities of the CAP goal projects are as yet not well defined. It would be useful to define the authority of these leaders as experience with CAP goal projects grows. More broadly, what role definitions and authorities are emerging for the statutorily mandated roles of COO, PIOs, PIC, etc.?

Cross-agency collaboration within a department is less problematic than cross-agency initiatives that involve more than one department. A within-department effort can be led by a Deputy Assistant Secretary. Funds may be transferred within departments. Cross-agency projects that lie within a department are clearer in terms of authority and accountability. The resources fall within a single appropriations account. Personnel ratings of those involved with the project are within the same system.

The authorities granted to goal leaders relate to the adequacy and sharing of resources to support cross-agency projects. For different types of projects one might ask: What are the mechanisms for transferring funds? What incentives do agencies have to actually make their requested contributions to a shared budget? Is a cross-agency goal leader given authority to provide input into agency budget priorities? For example, the Office of National Drug Control Policy is a White House agency. The head of the Office has authority to appeal budget decisions to the President if necessary. According to John Kamensky, in the 20-30 year life of the Office, this authority has only been used twice. Yet its existence indicates the power of the Office head.

If there are, for example, 60 STEM education programs across agencies, can the cross-agency goal leader have the authority to suggest or require that more money flow to one agency versus another for the purpose of furthering the cross-agency goal? According to Kamensky, "in other countries that authority is given to the goal leader, who is a minister in other countries."

The emerging "enterprise model" develops some of these questions further and proposes ambitious paths forward to develop "enterprise leaders," based in OMB who would be put on performance contracts and, presumably, would have increased authorities.<sup>101</sup> These questions are as yet unresolved.

OPPM and the PIC have accomplished heroic work with shoestring staff and resources. Not surprisingly, on OMB official central to the cross-agency efforts, interviewed for this study, noted: "I'm an advocate for building central capacity for cross agency."

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<sup>101</sup> For examples of this line of thinking see Partnership for Public Service and Booz Allen Hamilton, *Building the Enterprise: Nine Strategies for a More Integrated, Effective Government*, August 2013. Available at <http://ourpublicservice.org/OPS/publications/download.php?id=228>; and Jackson Nickerson and Ronald Sanders, eds., *Tackling Wicked Government Problems: A Practical Guide for Enterprise Leaders*, Brookings Institution Press, 2013.

As noted previously in this report, GPRAMA also required that OPM develop a list of skills for cross-agency collaboration. This type of professional development and the incentive structure for human capital – selection processes, performance appraisal, reward systems, and development strategies – must be aligned with cross-agency perspectives in order to foster incentives for government managers, including agency general counsel and attorneys, to participate in what can be risky career moves.

GPRAMA created the cross-agency priority goals and in doing so created a new construct whose implications for public administration and management have not been analyzed in detail. It may be too soon, that is, there may not be a sufficient base of experience developed, to conduct such an analysis. But some of the pertinent questions may be framed at present and lessons drawn from past practice are important to bring forward to present analysis.

Lessons from the past may be informative. Lessons and practices emerging in the present may be even more important to harvest and share. The next section of this report presents detailed case study summaries of four cross-agency projects. They are meant to show implementation of GPRAMA “on the ground” and in context as well as aim to highlight challenges and tools.

## **IX. CASE STUDIES OF CROSS-AGENCY COLLABORATION**

### **A. Introduction**

The case studies in this section of the report are meant to place cross-agency collaboration, its challenges and tools employed to overcome challenges, into context. The cases examine four quite different projects that range from a broad CAP goal (Exports) to a strong partnership between two agencies whose tasks are different but complementary (HUD-VA partnership to eliminate veteran homelessness) to an ambitious effort of three agencies to re-conceptualize policymaking for communities (the DOT, HUD, EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities) and a process-oriented rapid results task force initiative to re-engineer permitting and review, Federal Permitting and Review of Large Infrastructure Projects. Readers with less interest in case study details can skip the case studies and proceed directly to lessons learned and recommendations. The case studies describe, if briefly, some of the challenges encountered and a variety of tools, practices and approaches to collaboration. Underlying all of these projects are interagency agreements to permit the sharing of data, systems, people, and authorities and the agency attorneys and staff who often work to draft such agreements. If more cross-agency collaboration develops in the federal government, the pressure on agency general counsels and attorneys to develop possibly more complex and certainly more frequent interagency agreements may be substantial.

### **B. Case Study 1: The National Export Initiative**

The first of President Obama’s cross-agency priority goals is expansion of exports. This cross-agency project exemplifies cross-agency collaboration at the highest levels of the government in support of more cohesive policymaking to increase international trade. The

National Export Initiative encompasses collaboration for international policymaking as well as multiple other cross-agency collaborative projects to integrate outreach efforts to small business that are the province of several trade agencies, to align more strategically with state-level trade development programs, to design a one-stop-shop Exports website to streamline information and services for businesses that want to export and a host of other related projects. The point is to highlight the number of different types of collaboration bundled together within the National Export Initiative. At the same time, several goals to increase exports proceed in parallel. For these activities, collaboration does not imply inter-dependent tasks and processes but simply alignment of a variety of separate programs toward a shared overarching goal.

**1. Background**

Nearly 95 percent of the world’s consumers live outside the United States and, during the next five years, the International Monetary Fund estimates that almost 87 percent of global economic growth will take place outside the U.S.<sup>102</sup>

The National Export Initiative (NEI), the first CAP goal launched in January 2010, is designed to double U.S. exports over five years, by the end of 2014. This would result in exports increasing from \$1.8T to \$3.6T.<sup>103</sup> Streamlining and efficiency gains through cross-agency collaboration are part of the initiative, but the major challenge lies in efforts to develop more effective policymaking across agency boundaries.

The scale and scope of this cross-agency collaborative strategy are larger than most other cross-agency collaborations and deeper than past cross-agency efforts because they involve networked policymaking rather than simply streamlining management functions (although many management functions related to exports and trade are streamlined in this initiative). The “champion” for this collaboration is the President who has mentioned the importance of export promotion explicitly in at least two State of the Union Addresses. The ongoing champion was former OMB director and former Chief Performance Officer of OMB, Jeffrey Zients. The goal leader is Michael Froman, Assistant to the President for International Economics. The CAP exports working groups include public managers from 20 agencies.

The number and type of partners for this CAP goal signify its range and complexity as noted in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Exports CAP Goal Partners**

<b>Department of Agriculture</b>		
Foreign Agriculture Service; Foreign Market Development Program; Market Access Program	Export Credit Guarantee Program; Emerging Markets Program	Supplier Credit Export Program; and, Agricultural Marketing Service

<sup>102</sup> See "International Monetary Fund." World Economic Outlook 2013, *available at* <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2013/01/pdf/text.pdf>

<sup>103</sup> See Cross Agency Priority Goal. Exports: Double U.S. exports by the end of 2014. Available at [http://goals.performance.gov/sites/default/files/images/Exports\\_CAP\\_Goal-FY2013\\_Quarter3.p](http://goals.performance.gov/sites/default/files/images/Exports_CAP_Goal-FY2013_Quarter3.p)

<b>Department of Commerce</b>		
International Trade Administration; Market Access and Compliance; Import Administration; Manufacturing and Services;	U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service; Trade Promotion Programs; District Export Councils; SelectUSA;	Strategic Partnership Programs; Market Development Cooperator Program; Advocacy Center
<b>Department of State</b>		
U.S. Embassies and Consulates; Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs;	Trade Policy and Programs; and, Commercial and Business Affairs	
<b>Export-Import Bank</b>		
Working Capital Guarantee Program; Export Credit Insurance;	Loan Guarantee & Direct Loan Program; Finance Lease Guarantees Program	
<b>Overseas Private Investment Corporation</b>		
Small and Medium-Enterprise Financing; Structured Financing; Investment Insurance	Investment Funds; and, Enterprise Development Network	
<b>Small Business Administration:</b>		
Office of International Trade; Small Business Development Centers; Export Legal Assistance Network;	Export Express and International Trade Loan Programs; Export Working Capital Program; and, State Trade and Export Promotion Grants	
<b>U.S. Trade and Development Agency</b>		
Project Development Program Feasibility Studies; Pilot Projects; and, Technical Assistance	International Business Partnership Program Reverse Trade Missions; Conferences; and, Workshops	
<b>Office of the U.S. Trade Representative</b>		

In 1992 Congress established the Trade Policy Coordinating Committee (TPCC) to be coordinated by the Secretary of Commerce and based in the Department of Commerce’s International Trade Administration. The TPCC developed collaboration in several areas, including cross-agency staff training and improved outreach to potential exporters. However, it lacked a focused, cohesive strategy with a clear set of goals, adequate funding, and continuity of direction. By 2002, “the government had identified the overall national export strategies.” TPCC member agencies had identified trade-promoting programs and activities.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>104</sup> See an excellent detailed historical account of developments co-authored by Patrick Mendis, former chairman of the U.S. State Department interagency working group on science, technology and intellectual property rights and with experience in the Departments of Agriculture, Defense and Energy. Patrick Mendes and Leah Green. GOVERNMENT-WIDE COLLABORATION BOOSTS NATIONAL TRADE. *Public Manager*. Spring 2010, pp. 43-47.

A GAO report in October 2005 outlined dimensions of successful cross-agency cooperative efforts that echo traditional public administration and management research:<sup>105</sup>

- Orient agency initiatives by identifying and detailing a common outcome or uniform measurements of progress toward a common goal
- Develop “mutually reinforcing or joint strategies” to identify priorities and optimal resource use
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of each agency so that policies and procedures can be meshed and one can bridge agency boundaries
- Develop uniform metrics to track, evaluate and report results
- Develop shared planning, reporting and performance management systems to reinforce accountability

While these prescriptions identify what is required when collaboration takes place, many agencies need a path specifying “how,” “when,” and “who,” should accomplish change and reform strategies.

In 2006, TPCC agencies responded to GAO’s unenthusiastic progress report on its activities by undertaking specific actions such as: increasing cross-agency staff training; improving development and communication of trade information; and strengthening outreach, particularly to new potential exporters. In spite of these activities, there was no government-wide strategy and little evaluation of progress, or, in some cases, metrics or indicators by which to track progress. There was a national export strategy but it lacked systems and responsibilities, administrative capacity, for tracking, monitoring and coherence from one year to the next. GAO issued similar criteria in 2009 noting ongoing challenges within the TPCC to coordinate activities and programs.<sup>106</sup>

Funding has been a challenge for TPCC. Moreover, TPCC has had little influence over agency resource allocations. GAO and others have noted the complexity of focusing on various countries and regions, on numerous industry sectors, and many dimensions of the exporting process from initial research to financing and in-country support.

In October 2009, President Obama convened the TPCC as the first cabinet-level interagency group in his administration and decided to use the TPCC--itself a cross-agency collaborative body--as the primary coordinator for export promotion, one of the administration’s key policy goals. The federal government was also acutely aware of energetic, aggressive and coherent trade strategies in other countries. A 2010 report to the President noted that

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<sup>105</sup> See U.S. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE, GAO-06-15. RESULTS ORIENTED GOVERNMENT PRACTICES THAT CAN HELP ENHANCE AND SUSTAIN COLLABORATION AMONG FEDERAL AGENCIES (2005), available at <http://www.gao.gov/assets/250/248219.pdf>

<sup>106</sup> See U.S. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE, GAO-09-904SP, INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION KEY ISSUES FOR CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT OF NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGIES, ORGANIZATIONS, WORKFORCE, AND INFORMATION SHARING (2009) available at <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d09904sp.pdf>

Unlike many other countries in Europe and Asia, the United States does not have a single agency or government department responsible for creating a unified approach to governing export promotion. Instead, 20 different departments and agencies approach exports with differing mandates. The TPCC serves as the coordinating body designed to ensure that these agencies and departments act together and work to implement the Administration's export promotion agenda, through quarterly principals meetings and more frequent working group meetings on a variety of subjects.<sup>107</sup>

Before GPRAMA was passed, in his State of the Union Address of 2010, President Obama launched the National Export Initiative, "a single, comprehensive strategy to promote American exports ... [and to] marshal the full resources of the U.S. government ...". The goal announced was striking: to double exports by the end of 2014 (from 2009 levels). The President noted that it "is designed so that U.S. Government agencies are focused and are working together to ensure that our companies have access to ... markets, and that all companies, large and small, get the assistance they need to compete on a fair and level basis with foreign competitors."<sup>108</sup>

In March 2010, the President formed the Export Promotion Cabinet, a cross-agency executive group including Secretaries, directors, and leaders of 16 departments and agencies. The President directed the cabinet to develop recommendations to implement the NEI. The recommendations were presented to the President in September 2010.<sup>109</sup> Thus, a cross-agency collaborative initiative was tasked by the President to formulate a set of cross-agency objectives.

In 2010, Patrick Mendis, an international trade expert with many years of government executive experience, provided an analysis of key hurdles to an effective export strategy and capacity.<sup>110</sup> He identified the "fundamental constraint" as lack of "a unified national budget for trade promotion." Second, he observed that congressional committees do not align with a national export strategy, specifically, noting that agencies are evaluated on agency-centric statutory requirements and budgets with each agency submitting a separate budget to OMB. He argued that the third key constraint to be that "DOC needs to work closely with OMB in order to align strategies with budgets."

In its first report to the President, the Trade Promotion Cabinet and TPCC noted the challenges of integrated trade policies in terms of American business:

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<sup>107</sup> U.S. NATIONAL EXPORT INITIATIVE, REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT ON THE NATIONAL EXPORT INITIATIVE (2010), p. 59; available at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/nei\\_report\\_9-16-10\\_full.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/nei_report_9-16-10_full.pdf).

<sup>108</sup> U.S. Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee. 2011 National Export Strategy: Powering the National Export Initiative. June 2011, p. i.

<sup>109</sup> Five components define the NEI. First, improve advocacy and trade promotion through trade missions and advocacy centers. Second, improve access to export financing. Third, lower barriers to trade by opening markets. Fourth, enforce U.S. trade rules. Fifth, develop global policies to promote global growth. The priority areas of activity for the cross-agency collaborative strategy in 2010 were: Priority 1: Exports by Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs); Priority 2: Federal Export Assistance; Priority 3: Trade Missions; Priority 4: Commercial Advocacy; Priority 5: Increasing Export Credit; Priority 6: Macroeconomic Rebalancing; Priority 7: Reducing Barriers to Trade; Priority 8: Export Promotion of Services. Several working groups formed around these priority areas.

<sup>110</sup> Mendis and Green, *supra*, p. 47.



The main collaboration task is to help American businesses overcome ‘information barriers (how to navigate other countries’ markets or policies) rather than have each company reinvent the wheel each time it tries to export to a new country. In addition, there is generally a cost to entering a new market. If the U.S. Government could efficiently help firms reduce that fixed cost, the U.S. economy can perform better.’<sup>111</sup>

## 2. *Cross-Agency Collaboration Within the NEI*

The centrality of cross-agency collaboration is emphasized in the NEI through four general themes (from Sept 2010 report):<sup>112</sup>

- Strengthen interagency information-sharing and coordination
- Leverage and enhance technology to reach potential exporters and provide U.S. business with the tools they need to export successfully
- Leverage combined efforts of State and local governments and public-private partnerships
- Have unified goals to TPCC member agencies to support the NEI’s implementation

The President used his executive authority to order the NEI to launch a one-stop website for exports.<sup>113</sup> The agencies that comprise TPCC developed a shared website, [Export.gov](http://www.export.gov), as the single portal for all export information for businesses. Like the portals developed by other virtual agencies, [Export.gov](http://www.export.gov) is meant to give its users a seamless experience in web-based interactions with the government. Moreover, following a raft of earlier cross-agency initiatives, trade agencies have undertaken the prosaic tasks of streamlining processes for trade activity by reducing the number and variety of forms, harmonizing inconsistent terminology, and reducing the number of steps required for businesses to engage in exporting. The broad scope of the Exports cross-agency priority goal draws in many cross-agency working groups throughout the federal government (as well as at other levels of government and in other sectors) that are not officially part of the NEI. For example, the 2010 report to the President notes that an interagency process directed by the National Security Council and begun in 2009 forwarded four principal reforms to improve the functioning of export controls: “a single export-control list, a single information-technology system, a single licensing agency, and a single enforcement-coordination

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<sup>111</sup> THE EXPORT PROMOTION CABINET, REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT ON THE NATIONAL EXPORT INITIATIVE (2010) p. 2, available at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/nei\\_report\\_091510\\_short.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/nei_report_091510_short.pdf).

<sup>112</sup> Specific examples of cross-agency collaboration in the 2010 report to the President include: (1) Under priority 2: Federal Export Assistance: “Improving cooperation between TPCC agencies to encourage U.S. green technology companies to export by matching foreign buyers with U.S. producers.” (Sept. 2010 report, p. 5); (2) -- Priority 3: Trade Missions: “Improving coordination with state government trade offices and national trade associations.”; (3) – Priority 4: Commercial Advocacy: “Leveraging multiple agencies’ assistance in the advocacy process and extending outreach efforts to make more U.S. companies aware of the Federal Government’s advocacy program.” (p. 6 of 9/2010 report); (4) – Priority 5: Increasing Export Credit: “Making it easier for exporters and other customers to use Government credit programs by streamlining applications and internal processes.” (p. 6); (5) – Priority 8: Export Promotion of Services: “Better coordinating services export promotion efforts.” (p. 7).

<sup>113</sup> Exec. Order No. 13534, 75 FR 12433 (March 16, 2010).

agency.” The report noted that congressional action would be required to implement some of these recommendations. In August 2010, the report notes, “the President announced the foundation of a new export control system based on this analysis.”<sup>114</sup>

### 3. *From Cross-Agency Collaboration to a New Federal Agency*

In his 2011 State of the Union Address, President Obama articulated the need for reorganization of the government.<sup>115</sup> In March 2011, President Obama issued an executive memorandum with directives to “consolidate and reorganize the executive branch of the Federal Government” in ways that would reduce redundancy and duplicative programs in order to increase the government’s ability to engage in strategy planning and implementation.<sup>116</sup> With the enactment of GPRAMA in January 2011, the executive directive assigned the government’s first Chief Performance Officer, Jeffrey Zients, who would later also serve as Deputy Director of Management of OMB, to the post. The presidential memo said: “The first focus of this effort shall be on the executive departments and agencies and the functions that support . . . increasing trade, exports, and our overall competitiveness . . .” Thus, a cross-agency collaboration began to take shape as a proposed new federal agency. Not only was the federal government replete with duplication and overlapping programs, but ironically, information technology had exacerbated the problem as a cacophony of systems, applications and contracts formed a morass of competing, overlapping and expensive systems. Economic scarcity had finally led public officials to confront the difficult task of reorganizing bricks and mortar rather than building virtual agencies and programs on top of poor organization.

Later in March 2011, Zients said in a speech: “Today, our government has more than 12 different government agencies involved in trade and exports, many of which are doing the same thing. Not surprisingly, many businesses, particularly small- and medium-sized businesses, are confused about where to go for export assistance.”<sup>117</sup> This logic had been used for nearly 20 years as the impetus for cross-agency collaboration, but the proposal to create a new federal agency by moving beyond collaboration to formal reorganization was a new step for the federal government. In fact, the standing authority for a president to reorganize federal agencies was allowed to sunset during the Reagan Administration. So the president would have to seek such authority from the Congress, a request that ultimately was unsuccessful.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> NEI, Report to the President, 2010, *supra*, p. 18.

<sup>115</sup> President Barack Obama. State of the Union Address. Jan. 25, 2011. In Cong. Rec. H461, Jan 25, 2011. <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CREC-2011-01-25/pdf/CREC-2011-01-25-pt1-PgH457-6.pdf>

<sup>116</sup> PRESIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, GOVERNMENT REFORM FOR COMPETITIVENESS AND INOVATION (2011) *available at* <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/03/11/presidential-memorandum-government-reform-competitiveness-and-innovation>.

<sup>117</sup> Jeffrey Zients, “Reviewing Reorg,” blog, March 22, 2011. [www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2011/03/22/reviewing-reorg](http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2011/03/22/reviewing-reorg) Accessed June 12, 2012.

<sup>118</sup> In February 2012 President Obama “submitted a proposal to Congress seeking the authority to reorganize and consolidate agencies and functions . . . The President announced that the first thing he would do with such authority would be to propose consolidating the six agencies focused primarily on business and trade, along with related programs at other agencies, into a single department. In the absence of reorganization authority, the President issued a Memorandum tasking the Export Promotion Cabinet (EPC) to develop cross-agency strategies and initiatives to

What is fascinating about this case of cross-agency collaboration, among many important lessons, is the ability to accomplish de facto, or virtual, consolidation and streamlining through collaborative means across agencies even as plans are detailed for establishing one new federal agency. Much of the reorganization needed may be accomplished in the absence of legislative approval of a new agency.

A Center for American Progress report offered a rationale beyond efficiency for creating a new agency:

The key reason for reorganizing is to create a more powerful and economically important agency that controls under one roof more resources and policy areas that touch on the private sector and job creation. ... Its potent set of authorities would also help bring the department into what is informally acknowledged to be the top tier of federal agencies—State, Defense, Treasury, and Justice—making it attractive to top candidates for cabinet posts. ... [C]onsolidation would make it easier for American firms to navigate their way through the federal bureaucracy ... there would be a voice at the cabinet table that is understood to speak for the interests of ... in global competition. ... Another reason for consolidation is efficiency ... better-coordinate policy [and] more cost-effective implementation.

The simplest option would be to create a Department of Business, Trade, and Technology. ... relevant agencies within ... Commerce ... with trade and business-focused agencies and offices, including the USTR, the SBA, Ex-Im, OPIC, and US Trade and Devt Agency [my abbreviations].<sup>119</sup>

The Center's report also notes that SBA would "signal the importance of small business in the competitiveness agenda" although the move would be politically controversial.<sup>120</sup>

While plans for reorganization were moving forward, the cross-agency collaboration continued to work on the NEI. By 2011, the TPCC agencies had developed "a standard set of cross-cutting interagency metrics to measure this Administration's progress on implementing the NEI over the next four years." The 2011 report of the NEI emphasized the development of government-wide performance metrics and indicators that had been developed across agencies leading Secretary of Commerce, Gary Locke to write: "The release of this year's export strategy marks the first time all 18 trade agencies have agreed upon common metrics to measure export

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make the most efficient and effective use of Federal export and investment promotion programs in support of the NEI." See "Cross Agency Priority Goal: Exports. FY 2013 Q3 Status Update, p. 4, *available at* [http://goals.performance.gov/sites/default/files/images/Exports\\_CAP\\_Goal-FY2013\\_Quarter3.pdf](http://goals.performance.gov/sites/default/files/images/Exports_CAP_Goal-FY2013_Quarter3.pdf).

<sup>119</sup> Note the difference in scale between the proposed Department of Business, Trade and Technology and the Department of Homeland Security. The consolidated business agency would include an estimated 18,000 employees in contrast to more than 200,000 for DHS. The estimated budget for the new agency would be approximately \$5 billion in contrast to the more than \$50 billion DHS budget.

<sup>120</sup> Podesta, Wartell, Kohli. "Center for American Progress." A Focus on Competitiveness Restructuring Policymaking for Results, 24-25, *available at* <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/12/pdf/competitiveness.pdf>.

promotion.”<sup>121</sup> The 2011 progress report noted implementation by the cross-agency group of 31 of the 70 recommendations and development of performance and progress metrics to measure progress and “to encourage interagency collaboration toward common NEI goals ...”<sup>122</sup>

On January 13, 2012, the President sought consolidation authority from Congress. He also announced that the first proposal for consolidation following reinstatement of standing authority to reorganize agencies would be to consolidate six agencies focused on business and trade.<sup>123</sup>

The President used his executive authority to order NEI to launch a one-stop website for exports. In February 2012, the President used his executive authority to direct establishment of the Interagency Trade Enforcement Center in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative: “... To strengthen our capacity to monitor and enforce U.S. trade rights and domestic trade laws, and thereby enhance market access for U.S. exporters, executive departments and agencies (agencies) must coordinate and augment their efforts to identify and reduce or eliminate foreign trade barriers and unfair foreign trade practices to ensure that U.S. workers, businesses, ranchers, and farmers receive the maximum benefit from our international trade agreements and under domestic trade laws.”<sup>124</sup>

Following his first meeting of the TPCC in February 2012, Commerce Secretary Bryson remarked that the new trade enforcement center would “institute a ‘whole-of-government’ approach to getting tough on trade enforcement ...”<sup>125</sup>. The ITEC EO calls for the US Trade Representative to select the Director and the Commerce Secretary to select a supporting Deputy Director. The leadership is to be supported by personnel from the Departments of Agriculture, Homeland Security, Justice, State and Treasury.

In May 2012, bills were introduced in the House and Senate to amend the Export Enhancement Act of 1988 to include greater attention to cross-agency collaboration including “identifying opportunities to consolidate or co-locate offices of agencies involved in such activities.” The amendments would also clarify the roles of members of the TPCC, institutionalize progress reports on development of Exports.gov as the single window for export

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<sup>121</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, "President's National Export Strategy Calls for Greater Federal and State Collaboration and Advancement of Trade Agreements." June 28, 2011, *available at* <http://www.commerce.gov/news/press-releases/2011/06/28/president's-national-export-strategy-calls-greater-federal-and-state->.

<sup>122</sup> National Export Initiative, "2011 NATIONAL EXPORT STRATEGY Powering the National Export Initiative" (2011), p. 2; *available at* <http://www.trade.gov/publications/pdfs/nes2011FINAL.pdf>.

<sup>123</sup> The agencies to be consolidated include the core business and trade units of the Department of Commerce (more than half the Department of Commerce budget is allocated to NOAA which would move to Interior under the plan), SBA (which was elevated to the Cabinet by executive order), the Office of the USTR, the Export-Import Bank, OPIC, and the US Trade and Development Agency.

<sup>124</sup> Exec. Order No. 13601, 77 FR 12981 (March 5, 2012).

<sup>125</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce. "Secretary Bryson Hosts Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee and Export Promotion Cabinet. Blog Post. Feb. 28, 2012. Available at <http://www.commerce.gov/print/blog/2012/02/28/secretary-bryson-hosts-trade-promotion-coordinating-committee-and-export-promotion-c>, last accessed September 19, 2013.

promotion and develop a small business interagency task force on export financing, among other topics.

Many different methods and types of cross-agency collaboration are critical to the success of the exports goal. Specific examples include:<sup>126</sup>

- Leveraging multiple agencies' assistance in the advocacy process and extending outreach efforts to raise the awareness of U.S. companies of the federal government's advocacy program
- TPCC agencies "developed an interagency review process to evaluate high-level advocacy issues that merit White House attention ..."
- Streamlining applications and other processes in the government's credit programs to make it easier for exporters and other customers to access credit
- Stronger coordination of services to strengthen export promotion efforts
- The International Trade Administration (ITA) and the Small Business Administration (SBA) have developed a consistent, cross-agency method to refer new clients to the right TPCC agency based on degree of experience with exporting.
- ITA developed an enhanced client intake registration process on [www.export.gov](http://www.export.gov). The registration form went live on December 17, 2010.
- ITA developed a new online free trade agreement tariff search application. If a user enters a product code, the application displays the tariff in force for a given year.
- The Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Export Initiative (RE4I) a cross-agency initiative to increase energy and energy efficiency exports, began in December 2010 and includes "23 commitments from eight separate government agencies to better" serve RE & EE firms.

#### ***4. Tools, Best Practices and Lessons Learned***

This case exemplifies the challenges to cross-agency collaboration on a large scale and some of the tools, from use of presidential authorities to streamlined forms, used to work within institutional constraints.

Institutional challenges to cross-agency collaboration for export promotion include multiple and competing budgets, lack of alignment between the Department of Commerce and OMB in terms of strategy and budgets, and fragmentation of oversight and authority for international trade across congressional committees and subcommittees. The scale and scope of the exports cross-agency collaboration highlights the challenges of focusing policy making and implementation across agencies and programs whose missions encompass policy and activities across a range of countries and regions, industry sectors, and exporting processes from initial research to financing and in-country support.

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<sup>126</sup> Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee. 2011 National Export Strategy: Powering the National Export Initiative. June 2011, pp. 4-7, 31.

Cross-agency projects like e-rulemaking and lines of business focus on streamlining functional processes that are similar or identical across agencies. The cross-agency collaboration in exports is of a different order of complexity altogether because it involves many different processes as well as collaboration in policymaking – obviously this is because of the shared broad policy domain of exports. Also among the findings of this case are that underlying analytical and statistical capacity is sometimes fragmented and may require stronger cross-agency collaboration for coherent analysis of inherently cross-agency policy challenges. Similarly, data and information sharing and integration are required to align performance measures across agencies needed to enable tracking, monitoring, measurement and evaluation of output and outcomes across agencies and programs.

This case offers lessons for other, similar inherently cross-agency policy domains including food safety, disaster preparedness, etc. The fact is that it is logically impossible and political and administratively infeasible to imagine reorganizing the federal government to streamline all of these policy priorities. But much can be done through networked, cross-agency collaboration. While this is by no means a panacea, it is a “second best,” immediately available, feasible solution space. Career executives have gained much experience working across agencies and programs. Information technology and web-based processes, tools and applications make it much easier to develop “virtual agencies” of many kinds.

## C. Case Study 2: Reducing Veteran Homelessness

### 1. Introduction

Veteran homelessness is a multi-dimensional problem of great complexity and urgency.<sup>127</sup> Reducing veteran homelessness is a presidential priority, but is not one of the CAP goals. It is the only agency priority goal shared by two agencies. The case examines the development of the virtual agency and shared agency priority goals, the only such shared APGs among the 103 priority goals in the federal government. This case study describes the two agencies’ joint use of quarterly review, or Stat meetings, to examine data, measures, and results across agencies. The most successful program for reducing veteran homelessness is the HUD-VA Supportive Housing rental voucher program, an interagency program that actually began in 1991. This case describes this interagency program and its key dimensions and interagency tools.

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<sup>127</sup> On the costs and policies related to homelessness, see, for example, Dennis P. Culhane and Stephen Metraux. "Rearranging the Deck Chairs or Reallocating the Lifeboats?: Homelessness Assistance and Its Alternatives" *Journal of the American Planning Association* 74.1 (2008): 111-121. Available at: [http://works.bepress.com/dennis\\_culhane/51](http://works.bepress.com/dennis_culhane/51); Dennis P. Culhane. "The Cost of Homelessness: A Perspective from the United States" *European Journal of Homelessness* 2.1 (2008): 97-114. Available at: [http://works.bepress.com/dennis\\_culhane/82](http://works.bepress.com/dennis_culhane/82); Donna Washington et al., "Risk Factors for Homelessness among Women Veterans," *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved* 21 (2010): 81-91. Available at [http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/events/specialized\\_court\\_judges/women\\_vet\\_homeless\\_risk.pdf](http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/events/specialized_court_judges/women_vet_homeless_risk.pdf); Jamison Fargo et al., "Prevalence and Risk of Homelessness among US Veterans: A Multisite Investigation," 2011. Unpublished. Available at [http://works.bepress.com/dennis\\_culhane/107](http://works.bepress.com/dennis_culhane/107); Libby Perl, "Veterans and Homelessness," Congressional Research Service, April 1, 2011. Available at <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA543259>.



Local level implementation is critical to achieving the cross-agency collaborative goals set forth by the two agencies. This case also highlights tools the two agencies use at the local level – boot camps, development of local best practices, sharing of local best practices across settings throughout the national network of communities. Finally, the case examines the complex data sharing arrangements that have been necessary to form the information infrastructure for the joint project.

Nineteen federal agencies comprise the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) which is charged with developing “a national strategic plan” to end homelessness with passage of the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act in May 2009. In 2010, USICH published *Opening Doors*, the country’s first comprehensive strategic roadmap for ending homelessness rather than managing it.<sup>128</sup>

## 2. *Developing a Virtual Agency*

HUD Secretary Donovan and VA Secretary Shinseki formed a “two-year leadership team” to head USICH. They directed their staffs to work in partnership to reduce veteran homelessness. Staff and managers at the two agencies review data together and develop joint interventions in communities. The leaders conduct joint briefings to Congress and, in general, appear publicly as a team whenever possible to convey the message that the agencies work together on veteran homelessness. HUD uses its expertise on providing rental assistance; VA focuses on outreach and clinical services to veterans. The two goal leaders and their immediate staffs travel to sites to work together with communities, such as a recent trip to Los Angeles to align the work of the two agencies, and other partners, at the local level. Several tools support this interagency collaboration.<sup>129</sup>

In an interview for this study, Mark Johnston, the HUD goal leader for veteran homelessness who helped to create the HUD-VA Supportive Housing Program, an interagency program in 1991, said:

Having a jointly administered, jointly appropriated program has been a huge part of enabling collaboration. I can’t tell you how powerful it is to have a program that you jointly own. We developed it together ... We went to the Hill. We explained it ... We have worked very collaboratively with our appropriations staff to create and refine the

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<sup>128</sup> *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness* was issued by the United States Interagency Council of Homelessness in June 2010.

[http://www.usich.gov/PDF/OpeningDoors\\_2010\\_FSPPreventEndHomeless.pdf](http://www.usich.gov/PDF/OpeningDoors_2010_FSPPreventEndHomeless.pdf). The emphasis in the national strategic plan on “housing first” adopts a causal theory that argues that housing is the first step for an individual toward solving other social problems such as mental health or drug dependence issues. HUD studied this concept and found strong empirical support nationally for the model. One of the four working groups that was convened by USICH and that contributed to the national strategic plan focused on veterans.

<sup>129</sup> See U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. “Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness,” 2010. Among other articles, see Barbara Poppe, “Interagency Collaboration Moves U.S. Closer to Ending Homelessness,” *The Public Manager*, Winter 2011; Mark Johnston and Susan Angell, “Partnering for Performance at Departments of HUD and VA,” *The Public Manager*, Summer 2013. “Perspectives on Ending Veteran Homelessness,” *The Business of Government*, IBM, Summer 2013.

program over time ... I don't know of any other program that is truly administered in two different agencies.

Both HUD and VA state the following agency priority goal for the period ending on September 30, 2013:

[From the HUD strategic plan:] Reducing homelessness. By September 30 2013, in partnership with the VA, reduce the number of homeless Veterans to 35,000 by serving 35,500 additional homeless veterans. HUD is also committed to making progress towards reducing family and chronic homelessness and is working towards milestones to allow for tracking of these populations.<sup>130</sup>

HUD's agency performance plan highlights the importance of cross-agency collaboration and other partnerships in helping homeless veterans. One of the core strategies to reduce homelessness in HUD's performance plan is increased provision of rental housing subsidies and homelessness prevention services.<sup>131</sup>

Mark Johnston observed in an interview for this study:

We wanted to formalize this great relationship, so we created a virtual agency where HUD and VA and the interagency council on homelessness [USICH] have a formalized working group that meets a lot. We have a staff that reports to us. We report up to our bosses [the Secretaries]. We rotate where the meetings are held and who is the leadership. Right now I'm the leader and a staff person from HUD supports. [We talk to each other about issues like:] What does the APG say? How are we doing? How are the boot campus really going? Do we need more research? Having this formalized process ensures that this continues. Even though [Susan Angell, recently retired former Executive Director for Veterans Homeless Initiatives at the VA] retired it was seamless ... so when Susan left Vince [Vincent Kane, Director of the National Center on Homelessness among Veterans, based in Philadelphia] stepped in as the acting.

Johnston emphasized in his interview: "We don't have a bunch of egos ... the person [on the team] who runs VASH is five levels down. I don't care about that. ..." Johnston's point about executive teams including experts from various levels is an important one to overcome the formality of teams and bodies that may only include managers at equivalent levels.

The two agencies use the required quarterly review meetings that are part of GPRAMA to integrate their data and operational capacity. Peter Grace noted that:

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<sup>130</sup> Department of Housing and Urban Development. Agency Goals. "Export Priority Goals, CSV file." Performance.gov. [goals.performance.gov/agency/hud](http://goals.performance.gov/agency/hud), last accessed August 28, 2013. See also HUD, FY 2012 Annual Performance Report and FY 2014 Annual Performance Plan, p. 2. Available at [portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=hud-12apr-14app.pdf](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=hud-12apr-14app.pdf), last accessed September 4, 2013.

<sup>131</sup> "HUD Annual Performance Plan, Fiscal Years 2012-2013" pp.29-30, *available at* [portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=FY12-FY13APP.pdf](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=FY12-FY13APP.pdf).



Secretary Sean Donovan believes in the importance of data and strong performance management. So we had actually already begun sort of doing a lot of these things, setting up these quarterly reviews, ... there was a little bit of a validation for us ...

... at HUD we have really tried to use these performance dialogues or ... our HUDStat process, to really use it as a way to channel the resources around IT, the staff resources where we have discretion to channel the resources to these particular priorities, ... so we're getting more for the capital investments and assets that we have out there.

Noting the importance of shared data and information systems, he continued:

One of the [priorities at] HUDStat meetings was that you have the program people ... but we also have our CIO ... and some of his key staff people so that there's greater alignment ... between the business and IT ... Its goes a little bit both ways, greater CIO investment in understanding the business, but also greater involvement in ownership on the part of the programs in the business in making sure there's accountability around the IT investment and delivery.<sup>132</sup>

Susan Angell, the goal leader from VA, similarly commented: "... when we look at our data ... we really can tell each other if you could do this a little bit faster, we could do this a little bit better, so it's really a very transparent, an open partnership where we share data, we share struggles and we share successes."<sup>133</sup>

Peter Grace also noted that the quarterly reviews offer learning opportunities for OMB as well:

A lot of the natural tension between the agencies and OMB — with OMB being at 20,000 feet and the agencies being on the ground — is being broken down because, I think, OMB is getting a firsthand look at what challenges the agencies are up against ... But that is good. That is really helping the agencies to really figure this [GPRAMA] out and use the resources of the PIC and leadership at OMB to really shape these in a way that makes the most sense for agencies.<sup>134</sup>

### **3. *The HUD-VA Supportive Housing Program (HUD-VASH)***

HUD and VA fund many programs to house homeless veterans.<sup>135</sup> The two agencies formed a collaborative project, the HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Program, to

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<sup>132</sup> Peter Grace, Interview, "How to make performance top agency priority," Federal News Radio, May 6, 2011. [www.federalnewsradio.com/?nid=86&sid=2373130](http://www.federalnewsradio.com/?nid=86&sid=2373130). See also Tom Spoth, "HUD dashboard to evaluate program results," Federal Times, July 16, 2010. [www.federaltimes.com/article/20100716/AGENCY03/7160302/..](http://www.federaltimes.com/article/20100716/AGENCY03/7160302/)

<sup>133</sup> Id., 58-59.

<sup>134</sup> Peter Grace, Interview, "HUD finds program success in review sessions," Federal News Radio, August 11, 2011. [www.federalnewsradio.com/?nid=551&sid=2491980&pid=0&page=2](http://www.federalnewsradio.com/?nid=551&sid=2491980&pid=0&page=2), last accessed September 2, 2013.

<sup>135</sup> HUD uses three programs to help veterans obtain or retain HUD-assisted permanent housing one of which is the HUD-VASH program. The Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program, uses \$1.5 billion in funding through the Recovery Act to assist individuals, including veterans, with homelessness. These funds were often

reduce homelessness among the most “vulnerable, ... needy, and chronically homeless veterans” and to transition veterans and their families to stable housing.<sup>136</sup>

VA former goal leader Susan Angell explained:

The HUD-VASH program has probably been one of our most effective ways to end veteran homelessness; it is the housing part of ending homelessness that VA does not have the authority to provide. Our partnership makes it possible ...<sup>137</sup>

The program is the “largest permanent supportive housing initiative for veterans” in the United States.<sup>138</sup> In HUD-VASH, HUD and the VA work through public housing agencies (PHAs) and VA medical centers (VAMCs) which make eligibility determinations for the HUD-VASH program. HUD and the VA target rental housing vouchers carefully through collaborative analysis of HUD point-in-time data on the number of homeless veterans in need of housing at a given time and in a given community, VAMC data on number of contacts, and close consideration of performance data from VAMCs and PHAs. HUD and VA identify through their analysis community performance which communities should receive vouchers and how many vouchers will be made available. Importantly, the number of rental housing vouchers a community is awarded is managed as a discretionary and competitive process.

HUD-VASH provides vouchers to homeless veterans to allow them to access rental housing in the private market.<sup>139</sup> Vouchers are combined with medical and other services that are managed by VA. The improvements made because of the cross-agency partnership include streamlining programs to provide services more quickly and easily and ability to target communities with the highest need. The two agencies also use rental assistance vouchers to reward communities that have efficient and effective processes that house veterans quickly.

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leveraged for homeless veterans entering HUD-VASH.<sup>135</sup> The funds will continue through 2013 and further, on a small scale, through the Emergency Solutions Grant program.

<sup>136</sup> Mark Johnston and Susan Angell, “Partnering for Performance at Departments of HUD and VA, The Public Manager, Summer 2013, pp. 43-45; GAO, “Veteran Homelessness: VA and HUD Are Working to Improve Data on Supportive Housing Program,” GAO-12-726, June 2012.

<sup>137</sup> “Perspectives on Ending Veteran Homelessness, The Business of Government, IBM Center for the Business of Government, Summer 2013, p. 58.

<sup>138</sup> *Id.*, p. 2.

<sup>139</sup> HUD and the VA determine the geographical distribution of HUD-VASH vouchers based on the relative need for such assistance using data on the number of homeless veterans. The funds are then distributed to the public housing agencies selected by HUD. Veterans must be referred to participating public housing agencies by VA medical centers. With HUD approval, participating public housing agencies may use some of the funding for project-base HUD-VASH vouchers, which involves attaching HUD-VASH assistance to specific housing units for a given period of time, as stipulated in a contract between the public housing agency and the owner of the units.

Key components of the HUD-VASH program are the case management and clinical services provided by VA medical centers and in the community as a condition of receiving a HUD-VASH voucher. VA case managers work with community advocacy groups, service providers, landlords, and local Continuums of Care to make sure that veterans obtain needed treatment and services, access benefits, and receive assistance with housing needs. The VA will target the at-risk veteran population with aggressive support intervention to try to prevent homelessness before it starts. (HUD Annual Performance Plan, Fiscal Years 2012-2013, p. 30).

#### *4. Building Local Level Capacity: Boot Camps*

Local level communities of care are primarily responsible for the implementation of HUD-VASH and, thus, for achievement of the goal of reducing veteran homelessness. For this reason, HUD and the VA have invested heavily in learning from the field, articulating local level best practices, and disseminating them to local level communities. The two goal leaders and their core staff travel to the field as a team and conduct listening sessions as a team. Some of these tools for cross-agency collaboration are detailed below.

The partnership was approached by a well-known nonprofit organization, Community Solutions, which had noticed implementation problems with HUD-VASH in several of communities. With a partner, the Rapid Results Institute, they approached HUD and VA to offer to develop and run intensive goal setting, process mapping, piloting and evaluation sessions called “boot camps” based on a successful model used to implement other programs to reduce homelessness. They adopted a strategy that began many years ago at General Electric called WorkOut, “a strategy that helps communities jump-start projects by breaking off a 100-day chunk, setting wildly ambitious goals and using any (legal) means necessary to achieve them.”<sup>140</sup>

Teams of approximately eight to ten local level managers and staff spend two to three days and set “unreasonable” (stretch) goals after intensively process mapping their local implementation processes for HUD-VASH. The teams include a crosscutting group of case managers and program managers from HUD, VA, the PHAs, local NGOs, and local government.<sup>141</sup>

The HUD-VA boot campus, designed by Community Solutions, involved building commitment to achieving a clear goal, process mapping across organizational boundaries to examine the problem from the perspective of the client, generating several partial solutions to problems exposed through process mapping, pilot testing the solutions during a 30 or 90 day pilot, re-convening to examine results and problems that emerge, and modifying process changes going forward. HUD-VA have organized several boot camps. They contract with Rapid Results and Community Solutions. HUD provides technical assistance funds to bring various communities together. The goal leaders of the virtual organization, including Mark Johnston are always either at the boot camp or Skyped in. When the teams have their reviews 30 days out, and 100 days out, he is always in on those calls. He commented in an interview for this study: “We have a core federal team that is on those calls. We track their performance. We know their lease up rates.” Boot camps include about eight people over three days.

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<sup>140</sup> Tina Rosenberg, “Teaming Up to End Homelessness,” *New York Times*, Sept. 12, 2012, p. 44.

<sup>141</sup> HUD and VA used a “train the trainer” approach rather than continue to hire outside facilitators for boot camps. They used regional conference calls to coach each other nationally. Mark Johnston, when interviewed, commented that he and his fellow leaders at VA and USICH always participate in follow-up calls. The headquarters leadership remain closely in contact with local and regional managers.

As a facilitator boot camps noted:

... the outcome has been dramatic. In New Orleans for example, the team worked to simplify paperwork needed to process a veteran's application for subsidized housing, and unified the process across several regional and local agencies. In Detroit and Houston, teams set up a one-stop shop for homeless veterans, so their requirements for receiving support are completed in one day. In Atlanta, the team set up a competition among VA case managers to incentivize them to focus their efforts even more sharply on the most vulnerable veterans. Nine of the thirteen participating cities made dramatic gains; and four of them set a new benchmark for housing chronically homeless veterans — averaging more than one veteran housed each day during the 100-day period.<sup>142</sup>

Many of the practices and tools used by HUD and VA to connect with local level implementation teams, to motivate, train and develop local strategies offer lessons for other headquarters and region projects.

### *5. Lessons Learned and Tools*

Local level federal employees and their counterparts in state and local government, non-profits and other organizations deal daily with the operational details at the implementation end of the policy process. These local level experts can often redesign processes so that they are streamlined: made more efficient, effective and innovative. But they require “permission,” direction and guidance. Push the operational collaboration problems down to the lowest feasible level in the search for results.

By working at the local, or implementation, level, the stakeholder community involved in day to day operations, or implementation, is engaged to provide ideas and innovations, solutions to problems, and to remind decision makers about constraints. The public engagement process, which is often separated from implementation, is done simultaneously as part of the problem solving, piloting, refinement and roll-out of innovation.

Using the methodology for problem solving of the Rapid Results Institute was vital to jumpstarting local level problem solving. The ecosystem here is not “self-organizing” and self-adapting. It requires considerable framing, jostling, encouragement, facilitation, and follow through from outside experts. The local knowledge was vital, but needed a galvanizing motivational methodology and facilitation/coaching to push local operators to be innovative.

In April 2012 HUD published *HUD-VASH Best Practices --Version 1.0: A Working Document*.<sup>143</sup> The language of the document emphasizes learning and stated that the document will be updated when new promising approaches are found and those deemed not as helpful are

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<sup>142</sup> Ron Ashkenas, “How Social Innovation is Helping Homeless Veterans”, Oct 10, 2012, [blogs.hbr.org/ashkenas/2012/10/how-social-innovation-is-helpi.html](http://blogs.hbr.org/ashkenas/2012/10/how-social-innovation-is-helpi.html), last accessed September 4, 2013.

<sup>143</sup> Office of Public and Indian Housing, HUD, *HUD-VASH Best Practices – Version 1.0: A Working Document*, April 2012. [portal.hud.gov/huddoc/VASH-BestPractices.pdf](http://portal.hud.gov/huddoc/VASH-BestPractices.pdf), last accessed August 29, 2013.

dropped.<sup>144</sup> The importance of concurrent processes -- of “simultaneous completion of one or more tasks, which deviates from the linear, step-by-step methods” -- is emphasized.

The HUD-VASH program staff have produced several webinars and other video and audio presentations available on the HUD-VASH website and through YouTube.<sup>145</sup> Some have featured local level case and program managers who have developed best practices.<sup>146</sup>

A facilitator who has pioneered approaches like the boot camps noted:

... Innovation requires the mobilization of an ecosystem. ... In several communities, for example, the teams received authorization to co-locate agency reps to improve communications and act as envoys for veterans to more easily navigate the system. The ecosystem also included private sector foundations, including Chase, Starr, and Home Depot that joined forces to enable the teams to come together.<sup>147</sup>

Several other resources for veteran homelessness are included in the broader partnership. The federal interagency council, USICH, offers a “searchable source of up-to-date information drawn from around the country that federal, state and local partners can use to further their collaborative efforts to end homelessness.”<sup>148</sup> The database is highly readable and includes “short profiles” of promising programs and practices and “tips for replicating.” The database includes evidence-based practices, promising practices, model programs, and emerging approaches. The site also offers several “tools for local action.”

## 6. *Centrality of Data Harmonization in HUD-VASH*

The agencies made a joint decision to develop a single method to count and monitor veteran homelessness over time and to report to Congress with one voice. Initially, the two agencies used different data collection methods and defined similar data variables differently.

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<sup>144</sup> The HUD-VASH listserv was used to send a request for submission of best practices to public housing agencies and VA Medical Centers that administer the program. More than 50 best practice submissions were collected. These were cross-checked with performance data and developed more fully through telephone interviews. The entries were supplemented through emails, other written materials, and conversations among federal agencies, PHAs and other partners.

<sup>145</sup> On the HUD-VASH website: “Every year since 2008, HUD and VA have awarded HUD-VASH vouchers based on geographic need and public housing agency (PHA) administrative performance. ... After determining which areas of the country have the highest number of homeless Veterans, the VA Central Office identifies VA facilities in the corresponding communities. HUD then selects PHAs near to the identified VA facilities, taking into consideration the PHAs’ administrative performance, and sends the PHAs invitations to apply for the vouchers.”

<sup>146</sup> A January 2012 video includes managers and program specialists from HUD and VA primarily to explain the HUD-VASH program and how it works. The webinar is a training video for local and community organizations throughout the country. A June 2012 webinar features “success stories” of learning in the field told by panels of community-level staff from Atlanta, Houston and New Orleans. HUD headquarters managers and specialists also discuss “best practices” in HUD-VASH emphasizing learning from the field and highly specific, innovative practices.

<sup>147</sup> HBR blog post on HUD-VASH boot camps by Ron Ashkenas, the co-author of the blog and managing partner of Schaffer Consulting is the co-author of *The GE Work-Out* and *The Boundaryless Organization*.

<sup>148</sup> USICH, The Solutions Database. [www.usich.gov/usich\\_resources/solutions/](http://www.usich.gov/usich_resources/solutions/)

They agreed to use HUD's point-in-time count, which is also used by nearly all communities nationally. They have continued to harmonize data, collection methods, timing, and other information processing in order to develop shared operations that target subpopulations, time slices and communities with increasing precision based on performance data.<sup>149</sup>

HUD-VASH relies heavily on data, specifically, participant eligibility determinations from VA medical centers (VAMC) and public housing agencies (PHA). Current, accurate and reliable data from multiple agencies are central to the process of making rental housing vouchers available to veterans.<sup>150</sup> Data entered into several different computer systems that lie across two agencies, HUD and VA, must be harmonized, valid and reliable in order to make funding determinations based on data. The VA began using a dashboard in 2008 to collect and report several data elements, e.g., the number of veterans issued vouchers, the number of veterans seeking housing and the number of veterans actually housed. A new computer system was launched in July 2012, the Homeless Operations Management and Evaluation System (HOMES). VA and HUD have finalized an information-sharing agreement to identify sources of discrepancies and "validate reports."

In April 2012 "HUD released a best practices document that illustrated how some of the challenges identified had been addressed." (GAO 12-726, introduction). In June 2012 HUD and the VA established a data system called HUD-VASH that links data between the two agencies for performance, policy and budget management.<sup>151</sup> Data that links behavioral causes and outcomes allows HUD and the VA to better target services to subpopulations.

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<sup>149</sup> Mark Johnston and Susan Angell, "Partnering for Performance at Departments of HUD and VA," *The Public Manager*, Summer 2013. [www.thepublicmanager.org](http://www.thepublicmanager.org)

<sup>150</sup> The process in brief demonstrates the value of process mapping. VAMC staff interview veterans interested in the HUD-VASH program to assess whether they meet criteria for homelessness. They then check the VA electronic patient record system for eligibility for VA health care. If the veteran is eligible, they then obtain the veteran's agreement to participate in case management. The VAMC then refers eligible veterans to partnering PHAs (subject to rental assistance voucher availability). If there is no voucher availability at that time, they place the veteran on an interest list. PHA staff compare the veteran's reported income to information from third-party sources such as SSA to verify income level eligibility. They also check the sex offender registry because sex offenders are prohibited from the program. GAO, "Veteran Homelessness: VA and HUD Are Working to Improve Data on Supportive Housing Program," GAO-12-726, June 2012.

<sup>151</sup> The Federal Register notice reads: HUD-VASH will serve as a national repository of information related to PHAs, HUD-assisted families, HUD-assisted properties for the purpose of monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the HUD-VASH program. Through a collaborative effort, HUD and the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) seek to advance the goals of the nation's federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness of veterans through the collection, analysis, and reporting of quality and timely data on veterans' homelessness. HUD will use the data provided by VA to track a veteran's use of available HUD and VA resources to secure affordable rental housing; as well as monitor administration of the HUD-VASH program by Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) and PHA-hired management agents. HUD will compare VA-provided data related to the HUD-VASH program to data maintained in HUD's system of records, the Inventory Management System, also known as the Public and Indian Housing Information Center (PIC) (referred hereinafter as IMS/PIC), HUD/PIH.01 for the purpose of assisting HUD and VA with the following: (1) Reducing homelessness among the nation's veterans; (2) identifying and understanding the needs of homeless veterans and developing programs and services to address those needs; (3) effectively administering the HUD-VASH program by HUD and VA business partners; (4) monitoring and evaluating the HUD-VASH program; and (5) producing aggregate statistical data without any personal identifiers, precluding the use of this data to make decisions concerning the rights, benefits, or privileges of specific individuals, or providers of services with respect to assistance provided under the HUD-VASH program. Federal

In August 2013, VA and HUD announced \$7.8 million in funding to support housing and clinical services for 1,120 veterans through the HUD-VASH program.<sup>152</sup> But in May 2013, HUD Secretary Donovan reported at the annual conference of the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans that veteran homelessness was not decreasing rapidly enough to meet the 2015 goal of ending it. By May 2013, the HUD-VASH program had issued more than 48,000 vouchers to PHAs which are being used to house 42,000 veterans who were previously homeless. A troubling development has been public housing authorities turning back vouchers because cuts have reduced their ability to administer the program. Donovan called this “a stunning turn of events.”<sup>153</sup>

## **7. Summary of Case Study**

This case study shows a cross-agency collaborative project that displays collaboration at a deep level. The leaders and managers have created a virtual agency. Over the course of a few decades, the HUD-VASH program has continued to streamline and harmonize processes with reinvigorated attention to ambitious goals as a result of the national strategy. The ongoing efforts to align data, data collection methods, and other system dimensions demonstrates how complex data sharing and integration across agencies may become. The case also exemplifies strong connections between headquarters staff and local level case and program managers to ensure that jointness and collaboration are modeled at all levels of the system.

### **D. Case Study 3: The Partnership for Sustainable Communities**

#### **1. Introduction**

The Partnership for Sustainable Communities (Partnership) is a cross-agency collaboration involving three agencies –the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) -- whose purpose in collaborating is to re-conceptualize community planning and development – including transportation, housing and environmental remediation – to produce more sustainable, livable, energy efficient and productive American communities. The project is not a CAP goal, but contributes substantially to the Energy Efficiency CAP goal. As an exemplar for other cross-agency collaborative projects, it may inspire similar re-conceptualizations of policymaking and more holistic approaches to complex, multi-dimensional problems. This case summarizes the purposes of the Partnership and examines the challenges encountered in development of a joint grant funded project using funds from DOT and HUD. The Partnership has produced a “barriers report” that might serve as a template for other agency partnerships.

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Register Volume 77, Number 85. May 2, 2012. Notice, pp. 26029-26032. [www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-05-02/html/2012-10578.htm](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-05-02/html/2012-10578.htm)

<sup>152</sup> Steve Vogel, “VA and HUD announce funding for homeless veterans,” *Washington Post*, August 21, 2013. [www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/federal-eye/wp/2013/08/21/va-and-hud-announce-funding-for-homeless-veterans/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/federal-eye/wp/2013/08/21/va-and-hud-announce-funding-for-homeless-veterans/)

<sup>153</sup> Steve Vogel, “HUD budget ‘keeps residents in their homes,’ Donovan says,” *Washington Post*, April 10, 2013. [www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/federal-eye/wp/2013/04/10/hud-budget-keeps-residents-in-their-homes-donovan-says/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/federal-eye/wp/2013/04/10/hud-budget-keeps-residents-in-their-homes-donovan-says/)

Finally, the case describes the ways that the three agencies of the Partnership work with regional and local offices to build cross-agency analysis and planning at those levels.

## 2. *The Partnership's Mission and Purpose*

The Partnership for Sustainable Communities represents cross-agency collaboration to support a broad concept--sustainable communities--within which are nested many focused, targeted goals and objectives. APGs for each of the three agencies involved building on existing partnership strategies and mission. Moreover, the Partnership activities support the CAP goal of energy efficiency by improving energy efficiency in transportation, housing and community planning and design.

The Partnership for Sustainable Communities defines its joint mission broadly:

Sustainable communities are places that have a variety of housing and transportation choices, with destinations close to home. As a result, they tend to have lower transportation costs, reduce air pollution and stormwater runoff, decrease infrastructure costs, preserve historic properties and sensitive lands, save people time in traffic, be more economically resilient and meet market demand for different types of housing at different price points. ....

... Three federal agencies came together to create the Partnership for Sustainable Communities to help places around the country develop in more environmentally and economically sustainable ways.

Six “livability principles” guide the strategy of the three agencies in their partnership:

- Provide more transportation choices.
- Promote equitable, affordable housing.
- Enhance economic competitiveness.
- Support existing communities.
- Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment.
- Value communities and neighborhoods.<sup>154</sup>

The Partnership aligns policies and coordinates use of funding to jointly support communities. They have developed joint programs, including a jointly funded grant program, (described below) “to ensure that activities build on previous funding and meet multiple community goals.”<sup>155</sup> A key dimension of coordination across the three agencies is development and offering of joint training for regional staff to build coherence at all levels of the agencies to support sustainable communities. These types of programmatic joint efforts used are a tool that other agencies can use to build cross-agency collaboration amid challenges.

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<sup>154</sup> [www.sustainablecommunities.gov](http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov), accessed September 3, 2013.

<sup>155</sup> NAS, *Sustainability for the Nation*, *supra*, p. 93.



Initially, DOT and HUD formed a partnership to more closely align transportation and housing policies. In 2009, the EPA joined them to form the Partnership for Sustainable Communities.<sup>156</sup>

The Partnership further develops and deepens earlier coordination efforts across the agencies. These efforts speak to the importance of long-term interagency relationship building and learning through joint projects.<sup>157</sup> The Partnership began before GPRAMA was enacted indicating that the new provisions for collaboration in GPRAMA were not the catalyst for the initial interagency collaboration. However, this collaboration among the three agencies is currently reflected in each of the agencies' strategic, or priority, goals indicating that the performance framework is being leveraged by the three agencies.<sup>158</sup>

### *3. Tool: Leadership and Visibility*

In 2009, the Secretaries of HUD and DOT with the Administrator of EPA announced the formation of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities in testimony before the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee.<sup>159</sup> Senator Chris Dodd was Chairman at that time and noted at the hearing that he did not recollect three secretaries ever having appeared together at a hearing of the Committee.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> As one indicator of its success, the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation and the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University announced in 2013 that the PSC is a top 25 program in the Innovations in American Government award competition.

<sup>157</sup> In June 2005, HUD and the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) signed an interagency agreement to further transit-oriented residential development. An April 2007 study, *Realizing the Potential: Expanding Housing Opportunities Near Transit*, recommended strategies for coordination between HUD and FTA with greater regional, state and local coordination. An August 2008 joint HUD and FTA report to Congress outlined coordinated strategies by HUD and FTA to improve planning, investment, and implementation and outlined statutory barriers to address. See DOT and HUD, "Federal Barriers to Local Housing and Transportation Coordination," August 25, 2011. [www.sustainablecommunities.gov/pdf/dot\\_hud\\_barriers\\_report\\_final\\_08\\_25\\_11\\_clean\\_2.pdf](http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/pdf/dot_hud_barriers_report_final_08_25_11_clean_2.pdf).

<sup>158</sup> The Partnership is included within one of HUD's Agency Priority Goals. Goal 7 of 7 agency priority goals enumerated in Performance.gov describes the HUD-DOE partnership and the agencies' joint goal: "Increase the energy efficiency and health of the nation's housing stock. By September 30, 2013, HUD will enable a total of 159,000 cost effective energy efficient or healthy housing units, as a part of a joint HUD-DOE goal of 520,000 in 2012-2013 and a total goal of 1.2 million units from 2010 through 2013." The DOT names "Livable Communities" as one of its strategic goals. Within this broad strategic goal is an agency priority goal: "Increase Access to Convenient and Affordable Choices." Description: Federal transportation programs have not been designed to consider the impact of transportation investments on land use, housing affordability, and additional infrastructure needs. DOT is focused on lowering household spending for transportation, improving access to transportation options, and reducing the demand for limited government infrastructure dollars. See Department of Transportation mission and goals. Performance.gov. [goals.performance.gov/agency/dot](http://goals.performance.gov/agency/dot)

<sup>159</sup> Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. Hearing entitled "Greener Communities, Greater Opportunities: New Ideas for Sustainable Development and Economic Growth." Committee Channel (video) available at [www.banking.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Hearings.LiveStream&Hearing\\_id=bc7b8261-a455-4499-ac44-84329af836ad](http://www.banking.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Hearings.LiveStream&Hearing_id=bc7b8261-a455-4499-ac44-84329af836ad), last accessed August 28, 2013.

<sup>160</sup> The White House also noted the importance of the partnership, writing: The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have forged a partnership to streamline resources, better collaborate with local stakeholders, and achieve superior results for communities. By coordinating federal investments and technical assistance, we are meeting

HUD created an Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities to be a single point of contact for interagency coordination. Secretary Donovan testified that other agencies have created similar liaison offices. In FY 2010 HUD actually established three new offices within the Office of the Deputy Secretary, including the Office of the Chief Operating Officer and the Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities. Although the position of Chief Operating Officer is required by GPRAMA, an Office is not. HUD has chosen to create a new component to institutionalize and strengthen the COO position. “The Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities manages HUD’s relationships with other Cabinet agencies and provides communities with support to ensure that housing, transportation, energy, and “green” building investments are working together to build strong neighborhoods.”<sup>161</sup>

#### ***4. Tool: Joint Grant Awards Funding***

In October 2010, HUD and DOT initially announced joint grant funding:

In an unprecedented collaboration between two federal agencies, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) today jointly awarded nearly \$68 million to help stimulate a new generation of sustainable and livable communities that connect housing, employment and economic development with transportation and other infrastructure improvements. The joint HUD-DOT funding will support 62 local and regional partnerships seeking to create a more holistic and integrated approach to connecting affordable housing, job opportunities and transportation corridors. ...

... Rather than require applicants to navigate two separate grant application procedures that might be on different timelines and with different requirements, HUD and DOT joined their two new discretionary planning programs to create one point of entry to federal resources for local, innovative sustainable community planning projects.<sup>162</sup>

A top executive at DOT, interviewed for this study explained:

They said ‘Let’s plan our grant money. Come up with one application. Have people jump through one hoop. Encourage local communities and states to do a better job of integrating housing and transportation. It probably took six months to get this fairly small amount of money and relatively low level request for cross-agency collaboration [accepted]. ... The rules that HUD has for grants are very strict due to congressional rules

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economic, environmental, and community objectives with each dollar spent. See: “Sustainable Communities Marks Three Years Helping Communities Build a Foundation for Prosperity,” The White House blog, June 29, 2012. [www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2012/06/29/partnership-sustainable-communities-marks-three-years-helping-communities-build-four](http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2012/06/29/partnership-sustainable-communities-marks-three-years-helping-communities-build-four)

<sup>161</sup> Performance.gov. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Agency Mission. Overview. [goals.performance.gov/agency/hud](http://goals.performance.gov/agency/hud), accessed August 28, 2013.

<sup>162</sup> HUD, Press Release HUD No. 10-242, “HUD AND DOT AWARD \$68 MILLION TO CREATE SUSTAINABLE LIVABLE COMMUNITIES,” Oct. 20, 2010. [portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/press/press\\_releases\\_media\\_advisories/2010/HUDNo.10-242](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/press/press_releases_media_advisories/2010/HUDNo.10-242)

that have been laid on HUD through the years ... It was extremely difficult and complicated to get the computer systems to work together. ... There were real technical, real statutory challenges to a relatively simple collaboration. ... this is a federal system that becomes unsettled on any encroachment on turf. It took months – computer experts, congress, legal experts—We finally did it and it was fantastic. We did not commingle the money. You applied for a grant. You either got HUD money or DOT money or both. ... That is a profound but a baby, baby, baby step. ... If we ever get the planning money again, we will know how to do it.

To develop joint grant-making DOT and HUD produced one application so that state and local government and other organizations without the capacity to develop proposals for multiple grants could use their scarce resources to develop one application. The agencies did not commingle funds. One joint application was used, but grantees were awarded either HUD money or DOT money or both. Staff at the two agencies jointly review grant applications and proposals while maintaining the integrity of their separate authorizations: DOT and HUD invite staff from both agencies to evaluate and recommend selection of grantees. Each agency allows the other to have input into the grant process. In addition, the Partnership agencies use reciprocity agreements. Each agency can recognize a community that has gone through a grant process with the other agency. If a community performed well in a grant program with agency B, then agency A can use this information and reward the grantee in the selection process. Third, DOT and HUD co-funded a call for proposals.

A DOT policy analyst explained in an interview: “Through the leadership [in the administration and] at HUD and DOT came together and decided to co-issue a note and develop a single evaluation process to award all the funds.” It was a challenge to coordinate two very different grant evaluation processes. HUD uses an elaborate scoring and point system involving one hundred points. DOT uses a five-point qualitative spectrum. DOT adapted to HUD’s system because HUD’s system is required under the Reform Act.<sup>163</sup> The policy analyst continued: “The two agencies wanted to award a single grant for each award, but it wasn’t possible given conflicting requirements across the two agencies. So they had to issue two grants and have grantees manage two different agency reporting requirements. They are trying to streamline across these differences for future grant-making.”<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> HUD Reform Act 1989. Pub. L. 101–235; 103 Stat. 1987 stipulates in detail through statutory requirements how HUD can develop and administer review and evaluation processes and funding programs for discretionary grants.

<sup>164</sup> Broader challenges are reflected in the structure of legislation across the two agencies. “HUD and DOT each have different historical relationships with the authorizing and appropriations processes. Generally, DOT’s major surface transportation programs are authorized in six- year increments, which provides Congress an opportunity to comprehensively review program structure and funding changes, while also providing funding certainty to States, which is important for long- term infrastructure planning and project execution. HUD, in contrast, does not have a similar authorization but rather various statutes authorizing its programs (e.g., Community Development Block Grants, Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974; HOME Investment Partnerships, Title II of the Cranston- Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act; Multifamily Rental Housing for Moderate- Income Families, Sec. 221 of the National Housing Act). Additionally, some HUD programs have evolved through annual appropriations acts. As a result, a number of different statutes would need to be changed to address HUD barriers, whereas for DOT, most barriers would be addressed in surface transportation authorization.” (Barriers report, p. 4.)

Under this joint grant-making scheme, HUD awarded \$40 million in Sustainable Community Challenge Grants to enable local planning meant to work holistically to bring together affordable housing, public transportation and good jobs. DOT awarded almost \$28 million in TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) II Planning Grants to foster project that unite housing, economic development and transportation.

Although there was solid support in Congress for the idea of integrated planning and more efficient use of federal funds, it was not possible for agencies to persuade appropriations and oversight committees to integrate or combine funds to leverage integrated planning and get more efficient results for cities.

### **5. Tool: Barriers Report**

The Partnership published a “barriers report.” The report was recommended by the Appropriations Committee, which asked the agencies to detail the legislative, statutory and regulatory challenges to coordination. The report summarizes “the history of barriers to local coordination of housing and transportation resulting from HUD and DOT statutes and regulations” as well as efforts to date and in progress to address them. The report concludes:

Congress is uniquely positioned to address these barriers and identify solutions needed to eliminate many of the barriers given its jurisdiction over DOT and HUD appropriations and authorizations. Doing so will allow the agencies to continue to support local and regional innovation and continue to advance the six livability principles adopted by DOT, HUD and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as the federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities.<sup>165</sup>

Those interviewed for this study noted that although the initial permissions and coordination challenges were “excruciating,” they now have the capacity to manage joint grants in the future. A DOT executive interviewed noted:

There’s a lot of turf consciousness. The committee jurisdictions. The budget process. It’s a very ossified process. Particularly now in an era of declining revenues. It should lead to more cooperation. In reality, it produces the opposite effect ... In other countries there is a lot more experimentation and adaptation happening.

In 2012, the three agencies partnered to fund the Governors’ Institute on Community Design to address economic, housing and transportation challenges in a coherent way and to more effectively use funding to catalyze economic development, smart growth and resilient communities. The Institute noted that “The Institute is one of the first programs to receive joint

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<sup>165</sup> U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, “Federal Barriers to Local Housing and Transportation Coordination,” (August 2011), available at <http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/pdf/dotHUDbarriersreportfinal082511clean%202.pdf>

support from all three participating agencies in the three years since the Partnership was established.”<sup>166</sup>

*Recommendation:* Cross-agency partnerships can address legal barriers to coordination and design tools, in some cases, to coordinate within those barriers. Through these collaborative efforts, agencies can detail specifically legislative changes that would improve efficiency, streamlining and use of resources. Other agency partnerships should produce “barrier reports” to specifically state legal, statutory and regulatory changes that are feasible to make and would improve coordinated efforts.

## **6. Tool: Local Level Capacity Building**

In some cases, local level actors require streamlining from federal actors to reduce the conflicting and fragmented rules, cycles, timelines, etc. of federal programs and grants. But in other cases, local capacity for planning, modeling, analysis, and other evaluative expertise is missing. Federal agencies have helped to build this capacity. An interviewee commented: “Sometimes local offices of federal agencies have never thought about working together, so that capacity has to be built.”

HUD and EPA each have field offices in each of the 50 states. The two agencies have created mini-regional partnerships at the regional and field levels. The interviewee continued: “Some of those staff work in the same building and have never met each other.” By building relationships, the two agencies at the regional and field levels develop staff who can cross-refer clients and create “a more seamless federal presence at the local level.” But headquarters staff find substantial variation regionally and locally in terms of support for collaboration.

An additional means of building local capacity is for the Partnership to support communities, through the use of discretionary grants, that are actively pursuing sustainable communities. These communities become examples of strong practice that are then held up as examples in webinars, on a digital map of best practice sites and through case studies, all of which are compiled and easily searched on the extensive Partnership website at [www.sustainablecommunities.gov](http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov).

In cases where a new regional-level interagency partnership requires substantial support and education, the partners have used some of the following “tools:”

- Deputy Secretaries conducted joint “Deputies Tours” in Cincinnati and Indianapolis
- The Deputy Secretaries held a Twitter Town Hall to take questions and comments from the public

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<sup>166</sup> The Governors’ Institute, “EPA, HUD, DOT partner to fund Governors’ Institute on Community Design, help states drive economic development, make better use of taxpayer dollars” July 24, 2012. [www.govinstitute.org/2012/07/epa-hud-dot-partner-to-fund-governors-institute-on-community-design-help-states-drive-economic-development-make-better-use-of-taxpayer-dollars/](http://www.govinstitute.org/2012/07/epa-hud-dot-partner-to-fund-governors-institute-on-community-design-help-states-drive-economic-development-make-better-use-of-taxpayer-dollars/)

- Partnership headquarters staff host a webinar series to explain how coordinated support works. For sustainable communities it was “investing in green infrastructure, creating context-sensitive streets, and integrating housing and transportation planning.”
- Regional roundtable discussions – for municipal staff, community leaders, business and industry, other stakeholders
- Regional “accomplishments report[s]” build cases to explain best practice
- Deputies tour; site visits – review progress on key projects
- Work with governors, mayors and others through their institutes. As noted above, the Partnership supports the Governors’ Institute on Community Design
- White House Forum – convene local leaders, business for discussion
- Case study database – launched with third anniversary report of PSC
- New, integrated grants

A recent report of the Partnership noted the search to deepen the collaboration:

As the Partnership enters its fourth year, HUD, DOT and EPA are working to align our efforts for localities even further – by streamlining the application process for our grants and identifying other grant programs that can be part of the Partnership for the future. And we will continue to encourage further collaboration with each other and other partners to consider housing, transportation, and environmental policy as they exist in the real world—inextricably connected.

## 7. *Summary*

This case shows the importance of sustained efforts at cross-agency collaboration over time and the deepening of integration as agency managers and general counsel gain experience working across boundaries.

An executive at DOT, interviewed for this study commented on the process:

One of the biggest [cross-agency projects] in the Obama Administration has been the Partnership for Sustainable Communities. This is clearly worth doing. We do a profound amount of transportation, housing, economic development, environmental planning and investment that is completely disconnected. We fail to capitalize on synergies and we spend way more money than we should and we don’t get the outcomes. That’s an area where the challenges [of cross-agency collaboration] are worth it.

The reconceptualization of mission, supporting sustainable communities, drives joint programming, grant-making and other activities. A DOT executive reiterated in an interview:

Agencies need to jointly run grant competitions, create joint programs, commingle funds across agencies. If you’re in the space of creating better communities, you need to be holistic. ... Interagency collaboration is nice, but what we need is boldness and experimentation to tackle some of the very complex challenges that don’t fit neatly into frameworks. We need good management. But we need a spirit of experimentation.

Particularly in infrastructure, whether you care about good planning or good outcomes, everyone cares about saving money. You save a lot of money when you put things all together. ... The current process is inefficient. In these budgetary times, we can't operate that way.”

## **E. Case Study 4: Expedited Permitting and Review of Federal Infrastructure Projects**

### ***1. Introduction***

The final case study differs from the first three in that it is focused on streamlining a discrete set of processes across agencies. While it is more focused in scope than the other three, it is no less important. The lessons and best practices developed by the team in this case offer guidance to other agencies on the use of dashboards, rapid response teams, and interventions at the regional and local levels to push collaboration throughout agencies among other promising practices.

Interagency collaboration is critical to modernizing the Federal infrastructure permitting process. Federal agencies are legally obligated to ensure that “projects are designed and constructed consistent with core protections for public health, safety, and the environment.” The environmental review processes of several agencies require public input into decision-making and consideration of alternatives. Efficient permitting is important for competitiveness as firms consider investments among countries and for job and economic growth. The President’s Council on Jobs and Competitiveness recommended steps to improve Federal permitting and review for infrastructure projects. These led to a Presidential Memorandum, described below, and the identification and careful tracking on a “permitting dashboard” available to the public of 14 “initial high priority projects.”<sup>167</sup> The projects varied in complexity, type, scale, and region and included, for example, the NextGen Infrastructure Initiative – Houston Metroplex (OAPM), a project to modernize the Houston area airspace by integrating new and existing technologies, led by the FAA,<sup>168</sup> and the Dakota Prairie Grasslands project of the USDA Forest Service tasked to review some 80 oil and gas applications for wells, pipelines, power lines and associated facilities in that region.

### ***2. Expediting Permitting and Review***

A Presidential Memorandum of August 2011 outlined some of the interagency collaboration required to expedite permitting for large infrastructure projects:

In the current economic climate it is critical that agencies take steps to expedite permitting and review, through such strategies as *integrating planning and environmental reviews; coordinating multi-agency or multi-governmental reviews and approvals to run*

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<sup>167</sup> The 14 projects are described and federal reviews, approvals and permits are listed at [www.permits.performance.gov/projects/High Priority](http://www.permits.performance.gov/projects/High Priority).

<sup>168</sup> See [www.permits.performance.gov/projects/nextgen-infrastructure-initiative-houston-metroplex-oapm](http://www.permits.performance.gov/projects/nextgen-infrastructure-initiative-houston-metroplex-oapm).

*concurrently; setting clear schedules for completing steps in the environmental review and permitting process; and utilizing information technologies to inform the public about the progress of environmental reviews as well as the progress of Federal permitting and review processes.* [Emphasis added.] Of course, the Federal Government is only one actor in the multifaceted permitting and review processes. ... Nevertheless, agencies must do everything in their control to ensure that their processes for reviewing infrastructure proposals work efficiently ....<sup>169</sup>

The OMB official leading the effort noted, “There are some detailees supporting this. Their leadership was asking what are the biggest barriers. I have all the OMB leadership on board. I lead an interagency steering committee that is deeply engaged. The working group is well attended. There is engagement from the Hill. All the pieces are aligned to create reform. But the problem is so complex you can’t generate enough analytical capacity to solve it on a government-wide basis. They don’t have the basic analytical capacity to solve the thorniest government-wide problems that they are trying to grapple with. ... DOD and DHS can look at the enterprise basis. They have the analytical capacity.”

The Secretaries of several agencies – Agriculture, Commerce, Housing and Urban Development, the Interior, and Transportation -- were instructed each to identify three high-priority infrastructure projects subject to their review for expedited consideration. Fourteen projects were selected and expedited. Agencies were directed to identify lessons learned from this experience and were required to make information allowing the public to track permitting, reviews and other actions, including dates for completion and contacts publicly available on agency websites. A Permitting Dashboard, currently in Beta testing but publicly available online was developed for this purpose.<sup>170</sup>

An Executive Order<sup>171</sup> required that agencies build on the lessons of the 2011 pilot projects to “incorporate into routine agency practice” permitting and review processes that are “transparency, consistent, and predictable ... for both sponsors and affected communities” with timelines, schedules for completion, clear goals, and tracking of progress. “They must encourage early collaboration among agencies” and other parties. “... they must enable agencies to share priorities, work collaboratively and concurrently to advance reviews and permitting decisions, and facilitate the resolution of disputes at all levels of agency organization.”<sup>172</sup>

In relationship to GPRAMA, the Executive Order established a Steering Committee on Federal Infrastructure Permitting and Review Process Improvement chaired by the federal

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<sup>169</sup> White House. Presidential Memorandum. “Speeding Infrastructure Development through More Efficient and Effective Permitting and Environmental Review,” August 31, 2011. Available at [www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/08/31/presidential-memorandum-speeding-infrastructure-development-through-more](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/08/31/presidential-memorandum-speeding-infrastructure-development-through-more), last accessed August 28, 2013.

<sup>170</sup> Federal Infrastructure Projects Permitting Dashboard website available at [www.permits.performance.gov](http://www.permits.performance.gov), last accessed August 28, 2013.

<sup>171</sup> The White House. Executive Order 13604. “Improving Performance of Federal Permitting and Review of Infrastructure Projects,” March 22, 2012. [www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/03/22/executive-order-improving-performance-federal-permitting-and-review-infr](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/03/22/executive-order-improving-performance-federal-permitting-and-review-infr)

<sup>172</sup> *Id.*



government Chief Performance Officer tasked to work in consultation with the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). Member agencies were to consult with one another to select a group of infrastructure projects “of national or regional significance” that would have their progress tracked publicly on the Federal Infrastructure Projects Dashboard that had been created in August 2011 and piloted with 14 infrastructure projects. The Executive Order follows GPRAMA-like guidance in that it requires the Steering Committee to develop a performance plan, to implement the plan and “coordinate resolution of disputes among Member Agencies” related to implementation; to “coordinate and consult with other agencies, offices, and interagency groups ... including the Performance Improvement Council ...” The Chief Performance Officer was directed to issue guidance on implementation, to develop and track performance in consultation with Member Agencies, and report annually to the President on implementation in a report to be published on the Dashboard.

The Federal Plan, to be developed by May 31, 2012, was directed to include “(i) institutionalizing best practices for: enhancing Federal, State, local and tribal government coordination on permitting and review processes (such as conducting reviews concurrently rather than sequentially to the extent practicable); avoiding duplicative reviews, and engaging with stakeholders early in the permitting process; (ii) developing mechanisms to better communicate priorities and resolve disputes among agencies at the national and regional levels; (iii) institutionaliz[e] ... use of the Dashboard” and [use of] other IT systems to share information. Members Agencies were to submit agency plans to the CPO.

### 3. *The Federal Plan*<sup>173</sup>

The Federal Plan outlines two broad goals: “...More efficient and effective review of proposed large-scale and complex infrastructure projects, resulting in better projects, improved outcomes for communities, and faster permit decision-making,” and “Transparency, predictability, accountability, and continuous improvement of routine infrastructure permitting and reviews.” As called for by Executive Order 13604, the four chief components of the plan are: “A Federal Plan with subsequent Agency Plans”; a set of important projects; the dashboard; and performance metrics and reporting.

The first tranche of high priority infrastructure projects, part of regional pilot teams headed by either DOI, DOT, or USDA, included the Tappan Zee Bridge Replacement, the Provo Westside Connector in Utah, the Denver Mariposa Housing Project, and the NextGen Infrastructure Initiative – Houston Metroplex project.

The report observes that, since the issuance of Executive Order 13604, “... Federal agencies have engaged in an intensive interagency initiative to scale up and institutionalize their efforts to ... improve the efficiency of the Federal permitting and review process.” The government-wide initiative to modernize Federal permitting and review processes “encompasses

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<sup>173</sup> The White House. “Implementing Executive Order 13604 on Improving Performance of Federal Permitting and Review of Infrastructure Projects: A Federal Plan for Modernizing the Federal Permitting and Review Process for Better Projects, Improved Environmental and Community Outcomes, and Quicker Decisions,” June 2012. Available at [www.permits.performance.gov/sites/all/themes/permits2/files/federal\\_plan.pdf](http://www.permits.performance.gov/sites/all/themes/permits2/files/federal_plan.pdf), last accessed August 28, 2013.

interagency process innovations ... improved coordination with other governmental jurisdictions and stakeholders ...”<sup>174</sup>

In addition, the Federal Plan seeks “recommendations for developing a one-stop-shop for online Federal infrastructure permit applications” and plans for a “transmission application tool-kit” and a “renewable energy development application tool-kit” as well as possibly other sector specific application toolkits. Such applications tool-kits are important because they can help project sponsors navigate the permitting process and set “expectations and give project sponsors clarity and predictability.”

The report notes that “best practices learned” from pilot and other early efforts include:

- “Engaging in early coordination across Federal agencies and with Tribal, State, and local governments and public stakeholders; -- integrated project plans ... outlining early agreements by agencies and sponsors ... including a dispute resolution process – establish rapid response teams
- Conducting concurrent instead of sequential reviews; -- “concurrent, coordinated and collaborative—rather than isolated and sequential—reviews”<sup>175</sup>
- Setting and maintaining schedules;
- Leveraging technology;
- Implementing pre-application processes that increase clarity and predictability of requirements and timelines”

Among the tools for interagency collaboration summarized in the report:

- **DOI Renewable Energy Task Force:** The Department of the Interior established a Departmental renewable energy task force in order to ensure “early coordination among the Department’s bureaus.” The report notes the successful collaboration between DOI and the state of California. By clearly outlining “meaningful deliverables, clear timelines, and joint work products,” in a MOU, DOI and California agencies were able to quickly move renewable energy projects through the multi-agency permitting process, sometimes in “as quickly as 12 months.” These efforts have produced effective partnerships resulting in “fast-track permitting of 30 new large-scale renewable energy installations on Federal lands.”
- **Tappan Zee Bridge Project:** Interagency collaboration, along with “... early coordination and innovative partnerships” where able to “shave a few years from the

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<sup>174</sup> The White House. “Implementing Executive Order 13604 on Improving Performance of Federal Permitting and Review of Infrastructure Projects: A Federal Plan for Modernizing the Federal Permitting and Review Process for Better Projects, Improved Environmental and Community Outcomes, and Quicker Decisions,” June 2012, pp. 2, Available at [www.permits.performance.gov/sites/all/themes/permits2/files/federal\\_plan.pdf](http://www.permits.performance.gov/sites/all/themes/permits2/files/federal_plan.pdf).

<sup>175</sup> The White House. “Implementing Executive Order 13604 on Improving Performance of Federal Permitting and Review of Infrastructure Projects: A Federal Plan for Modernizing the Federal Permitting and Review Process for Better Projects, Improved Environmental and Community Outcomes, and Quicker Decisions,” June 2012, pp. 9-10, Available at [www.permits.performance.gov/sites/all/themes/permits2/files/federal\\_plan.pdf](http://www.permits.performance.gov/sites/all/themes/permits2/files/federal_plan.pdf)

Tappan Zee Bridge replacement.” One interviewee who worked on the interagency project described the Tappan Zee Bridge project: “The posting of the schedule on the dashboard held the agencies accountable to meet a schedule ... Tappan Zee is a \$6 billion project [including] transit, a historic bridge, sturgeon in the river, hazardous materials in sediments ... through the Dashboard we were able to build a schedule from notes of intent to a record of decisions in just over a year. This was a fantastic success by all parties.” The Tappan Zee Bridge project demonstrates how the Federal agencies have responded with “pilot programs and sector-specific initiatives to accelerate infrastructure projects.”

#### ***4. Permitting and Review: One Size Does Not Fit All***

The report calls for merging different agency processes “for handling routine requirements for commonly encountered project types.” But, importantly, the report notes:

[O]veruse or poor structuring of these types of interagency agreements can slow down decisions by introducing an excessive number of points of concurrence required between two or more agencies. This can be avoided by using mergers judiciously for complex projects that would benefit from a formal agreement and by modeling new merger agreements on successful templates, with the goal of driving results rather than simply following a process. A leading example of an effective interagency agreement of this type is the 404/NEPA integration agreement between the Army Corps and the Department of Transportation’s Federal Highways for Department of Army permits (Sections 10 and 404), which has reduced permit evaluation and review timelines while improving environmental outcomes.<sup>176</sup>

One interviewee who worked on the interagency project described, among others, the Tappan Zee Bridge project: “The posting of the schedule on the dashboard held the agencies accountable to meet a schedule ... Tappan Zee is a \$6 billion project [including] transit, a historic bridge, sturgeon in the river, hazardous materials in sediments ... through the Dashboard we were able to build a schedule from notes of intent to a record of decisions in just over a year. This was a fantastic success by all parties.”

The Rapid Response Team, part of the implementation of the President’s memorandum, worked well, in part, because it allowed headquarters staff to identify a disconnect between local staff working on the project. Phone calls between headquarters and local staff allowed senior people to discuss the projects, to work on the cross-agency issues and to help resolve local level logjams.

A policy analysis from one of the member agencies recalled that the requirement for agency plans to achieve the broader goals of modernizing permitting and reviews led to

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<sup>176</sup> The White House. “Implementing Executive Order 13604 on Improving Performance of Federal Permitting and Review of Infrastructure Projects: A Federal Plan for Modernizing the Federal Permitting and Review Process for Better Projects, Improved Environmental and Community Outcomes, and Quicker Decisions,” June 2012, pp. 9-10, Available at [www.permits.performance.gov/sites/all/themes/permits2/files/federal\\_plan.pdf](http://www.permits.performance.gov/sites/all/themes/permits2/files/federal_plan.pdf)

“introspection at agencies to look at existing action ... to guide how they do permitting to see how to do better ...” Regarding interagency collaboration: “Missions collide. So how ensure that all agencies can satisfy their missions in a coordinated, predictable and transparent matter ... It’s understood that there are actions in Congress to undercut their authorities if they don’t act on this. So we want to do more efficient reviews ...” Missions of infrastructure proponent agencies, such as DOT, which provides funding are often not in sync with those of resource regulatory agencies whose mission is to protect the environment, cultural or historic artifacts or other things.

In the case of Provo, the Udall Foundation and a facilitator helped to break a logjam between the Army Corps of Engineers and the City. The Army Corps of Engineers is an agency, not unlike others whose tasks are region and sector specific, that is, very autonomous with limited influence from headquarters. This allows the regional and local units to respond to local needs with the appropriate expertise and tools. The facilitator did interviews with each stakeholder independently and a number of phone call with various groups working through each point of contention to finally develop an agreement. There were particular points of engineering that were not well-understood and shared across agencies. As a potential tool, external facilitators may be expensive. They should be called in only when agencies and other parties do not have the capacity to conduct the interviews, conversations and assessment to bring all the parties together.

Construction methods have progressed using ideas such as design-build. Agency permitting and reviews should be modernized to better align with contemporary design and construction processes, which themselves use more concurrent processes. Currently, DOT is updating an MOU with the Coast Guard to better reflect modern construction methods.

On May 17, President Obama issued a presidential memorandum<sup>177</sup> directing the Steering Committee, coordinated by the CPA and working in close consultation with OIRA and the CEQ “to identify and prioritize opportunities to modernize key regulations, policies, and procedures – both agency-specific and those involving multiple agencies – to reduce ... time, while improving ... outcomes” by July 17, 2013 and to prepare a plan for comprehensive modernization by September 17, 2013. Among other best practices to be leveraged are “process efficiencies, including additional use of concurrent and integrated review” “identify priority areas for IT investment to replace paperwork processes ... enhance interagency collaboration” among other benefits.

## 5. *Summary of Case Studies*

One of the key lessons is the overall process used to build greater interagency coherence in permitting and reviewing large infrastructure processes. This overall model could be replicated with suitable modifications in other policy areas. A second lesson is the importance of working effectively between headquarters and regional and local units of federal agencies in

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<sup>177</sup> The White House. Presidential Memorandum. “Modernizing Federal Infrastructure Review and Permitting Regulations, Policies, and Procedures. May 17, 2013. Available at [www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/05/17/presidential-memorandum-modernizing-federal-infrastructure-review-and-pe](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/05/17/presidential-memorandum-modernizing-federal-infrastructure-review-and-pe), last accessed August 28, 2013.

order to model interagency coordination and to keep field staff abreast of new developments. A third lesson is the use of the dashboard to make visible, public, clear and systematic to stakeholders, agencies, and the public exactly what the government is doing. This is a case in which authorities and expertise vary greatly from one agency to another as agencies with different—at times, nearly orthogonal—missions are developing coordination tools. The institutional differences have not been modified. The policies, procedures, practices and cultures are being changed. Finally, it is important to note the strong role of the President – through memoranda, executive orders – in requiring specific interagency coordination and related actions. There is considerable learning at the agency and interagency levels, combined with strong leadership, support and management of the broader process of change at the top.

The case studies offer an account of theme and variations across policy domains that traverse international trade, housing Americans, sustainability and livability in communities, and infrastructure development that respects environmental stewardship obligations. This range across policy domains provides different perspectives on similar collaboration challenges. Such a comparative view suggests where challenges seem invariant across cases, for example, and where they may be domain specific. Similarly, the cases described here allow us to view tools and practices in different settings.

These cases are meant to be illustrative and suggestive. They are not a representative or random sample. They were suggested as cases of promising successful developments to be mined for lessons. Among the themes reiterated in the cases are the following: First, cross-agency collaboration is essential to address a wide range of problems that lie inherently across agency boundaries. Second, leadership at the federal level is essential, but equally important are aggressive efforts to build regional and local level cross-agency collaboration. In some ways, these settings are more complex laboratories because they include many more actors from nonprofits to private businesses and more. Third, information and communication technologies – including social media – offer powerful tools and platforms that make collaboration that would have been completely infeasible in years past within the range of possibility. But these platforms and tools are not a panacea. They do not replace difficult and protracted negotiations between and among agencies that hammer out agreements and, at their best, lead to policies, practices, information and systems that are better aligned. Fourth, the roles of agency general counsel and attorneys, often implicit in these brief case summaries, are essential. They can provide flexibilities within statute and rules, provide critical aid in the drafting of agreements between agencies or hinder efforts to modernize the government. The changes in mindset and practice required of agency general counsel and attorneys are no less substantial than those required for policy and program managers.

The next section of this report gathers together some of the more important lessons learned and a selection of some of the more important tools. Not all of the lessons, tools and practices described in the case studies are reiterated. Moreover, some of the practices and tools described briefly in the next section are drawn from examples beyond the case studies in this report.

## **X. LESSONS LEARNED, TOOLS, AND BEST PRACTICES**

Although the challenges to cross-agency collaboration are significant, a growing number of collaborative projects and initiatives demonstrate tools, best practices and lessons that can usefully be disseminated across policy areas, agencies and issues. This section of the report briefly summarizes some of these tools, lessons and practices. The list is by no means exhaustive, but points to the variety of tools and practices that are available.

### **A. Lesson Learned: Establish a National Policy Framework**

The National Export Initiative, the national effort to reduce homelessness and to improve the food safety system, the National Oceans Policy, the National Incident Response Policy in support of national preparedness and other national policy frameworks are examples of overarching, cross-cutting policy frameworks that establish the need for cross-agency efforts to address policy problems that inherently lie across agency boundaries. A study of sustainability for the nation found that

the success of complex, multiple-domain, interjurisdictional, multidisciplinary initiatives is significantly enhanced when addressed within the context of an overarching policy. Such a policy should clarify general goals and objectives, lay out governing principles, and provide for an operational/functional framework that explicitly delineates roles, authorities, and responsibilities.<sup>178</sup>

Congress has taken note of this challenge, requiring many kinds of national strategy documents, in an attempt to balance agency-specific missions with broader, policy-area-wide interagency perspectives.

### **B. Balancing Costs and Benefits of Collaboration**

A DOT executive interviewed for this study emphasized the high coordination costs of cross-agency collaboration and the need to balance these against potential benefits: “The reality of trying to do something across agencies is that it’s incredibly difficult ... When is it worth it? This is a profound question to ask because there are some real areas where federal agencies have a desperate need to work together and other areas where, frankly, it’s not worth the trouble.” One of the lessons learned from this study based on several interviews is that, because cross-agency collaboration is difficult and hard, decisions must be made about allocation of time and effort, collaboration should not be undertaken without a “cost/benefit” calculation. A stunning omission from most of the writing on GPRAMA is an accounting of the costs of cross-agency collaboration relative to the benefits. That said, the start-up and other coordination costs of cross-agency collaboration cannot be used to avoid engaging the challenges that are entailed because, in many cases, the payoff from collaboration is substantial and enduring. OMB, GAO, and agencies may profit from developing approaches for assessing which opportunities offer the greatest net benefits, and which opportunities, if unexploited, engender the greatest risks.

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<sup>178</sup> NAS, *Sustainability for the Nation*, *supra*, pp. 93ff.

### C. Avoiding “One Size Fits All”

Many agency general counsel and attorneys interviewed for this study cautioned against an over reliance on centralization with excessive codification and standardization of cross-agency collaboration efforts. These cautions suggest the importance of the role of discretion and informal interaction in crafting interagency agreements.<sup>179</sup> In addition to reiterations of this theme in the interviews, I quote at length from two written comments submitted to ACUS in response to a previous and highly regarded study on interagency coordination.<sup>180</sup>

George Madison, former General Counsel at the Department of the Treasury, commented:

Although we support the premise that agencies should coordinate efforts, we have a concern about the draft. In particular, the draft recommendation provides that agencies ‘should adopt policies and procedures for facilitating coordination with other agencies.’ An undue emphasis on adopting formal policies and procedures might inappropriately limit the Department’s discretion to choose, on a case-by-case basis, the most appropriate mechanism for engaging in policy coordination. [DOT] has a variety of policy areas that are within the ‘shared regulatory space’ of other agencies, which have yielded robust consultations and reengagement with, for example, financial regulators, USDA, FDA, HUD, HHS, Labor, Education, SSA, VA, OPM, and Energy. A one-size-fits-all approach may pose unnecessary constraints.<sup>181</sup>

Danny Fischler, Attorney-Advisor in the Office of the General Counsel at the Department of Homeland Security and Esa L. Sferra-Bonistalli, Senior Attorney, U.S. Coast Guard jointly commented:

At the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)—which Congress created to enhance coordination throughout the homeland security enterprise—we fully recognize and acknowledge the essential role that interagency coordination plays. Indeed, the importance of robust interagency coordination is not the issue. Rather, the key challenge is to identify the most efficient and effective measures to achieve such coordination and then to find ways to implement those measures. To that end, we believe the way for the Administrative Conference of the United States (ACUS) to truly contribute to this area is

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<sup>179</sup> These topics are central to organization theory and public administration and management. See, for example, James G. March, “Exploration and Exploitation in Organizational Learning,” *Organization Science*. 2(1), February 1991, pp. 71-87; Peter Blau, *The Dynamics of Bureaucracy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1963; M. T. Hansen. “Knowledge Networks: Explaining Effective Knowledge Sharing in Multiunit Companies,” *Organization Science*, 2002. M. T. Hansen, “The search-transfer problem: The role of weak ties in sharing knowledge across organization subunits,” *Administrative Science Quarterly* 44(1), 1999, pp. 82-111; J. Schofield. “The old ways are the best? The durability and usefulness of bureaucracy in public sector management. *Organization* 8(1) (2001), pp. 77-96. J. Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy*. New York: Basic Books, 1991;

<sup>180</sup> Freeman and Rossi, *supra*.

<sup>181</sup> Administrative Conference of the United States. Department of the Treasury Comments on Draft Recommendation 4-26-2012. [www.acus.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Improving-Agency-Coordination-Treasury-Comments-4-26-2012.pdf](http://www.acus.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Improving-Agency-Coordination-Treasury-Comments-4-26-2012.pdf).



to identify concrete, specific steps that agencies can take to further the universally acknowledged goal of improving agency coordination.<sup>182</sup>

Further, they note the wide array of different missions, business practices, organizational arrangements, etc. that make the need for coordination more extensive than that examined so well in the discussion of shared regulatory space:

Our commitment to overcoming these challenges compels us to support the development of guidance explaining when and how to coordinate across agency lines. At the same time, however, we are hesitant to support a one-size-fits-all solution to a problem that we and our colleagues confront so frequently, at every level of government, and in contexts ranging from the regulatory to the legal to the operational. We are particularly concerned that the brief discussion of agency coordination policies in the draft report and recommendation would leave agencies with little to no information on how to develop policies that provide adequate and uniform guidance that simultaneously allow alternative modes of communication and negotiation.

Clearly, the caution that one size does not fit all and that the tendency toward formalization might impede efforts to increase cross-agency collaboration are important to keep in mind. Yet some codification, even in the form of sharing lessons learned and promoting broad frameworks that work is clearly needed to avoid case-by-case reinvention of the wheel.

#### **D. Keep Performance Requirements and Reporting Agile and Light**

In addition to the substantial transaction and administrative costs of cross-agency collaboration, there are additional costs of reporting including frequent reviews. These costs may be reduced by balancing the costs of processes with benefits and by maintaining agile processes for reporting. This is not to minimize the central responsibilities for oversight, reporting and planning, but to distinguish them from core mission tasks of policymaking and implementation. The processes work best when they are strongly aligned with one another.

A political appointee observed: “I’ve never read [GPRAMA]. ... I’m required by law to devote a lot of time to this alien process. There are a lot of good people at OMB. I’m being glib here ... Ossified really describes well some of our functions. The budget process doesn’t work very well.”

Another executive interviewed for the study, an attorney heading a large unit echoed these sentiments: “Bottom line: GPRA hasn’t either helped or gotten in our way. We know we have a GPRA officer, but we couldn’t tell you who that is. We happily operated without any help from GPRA. I don’t know that we want help from GPRA. That’s not politically correct. In your study and recommendations to ACUS, just don’t get more of those gratuitous functions added.” Later in the interview: “In [my] Department, we have enough just collaborating ... because

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<sup>182</sup> ACUS. Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Coast Guard Comments on Draft Recommendation 5-2-2012. [www.acus.gov/sites/default/files/documents/DHS-Comments-on-ACUS-Interag-Coord-draft-Recommend-5-2-12.pdf](http://www.acus.gov/sites/default/files/documents/DHS-Comments-on-ACUS-Interag-Coord-draft-Recommend-5-2-12.pdf)



there's nothing we do that doesn't affect more than one bureau ... they have to dance together ... the people on the ground need to interact. They don't need a GPRA person facilitating.”

By contrast, another agency executive interviewed observed: “We were one of the early embracers [of GPRAMA and setting clear goals]. ... I think a lot of our mission is quantifiable, which is nice. We have a lot of safety data. Being able to drive that is important. ... the Deputy Secretaries have a regular standing meeting with bureau heads. At every one of those meetings, he goes over the goals. Some of them are the larger ones on performance.gov and some are internal goals. That's a very effective strategy. That makes an easier discussion with any external party [including OMB] because he knows what's going on. It's not episodic. That's something we started about three years ago. If it were a process that were divorced from the regular accountability chain [that would be more difficult to implement].”

In spite of coordination and transaction costs, cross-agency collaboration and coordination are of obvious centrality and necessity. The point to be reiterated, however, is that their costs must be taken into account. These coordination costs pose opportunity costs – in other words, time and attention to coordination take time and attention from other core activities – for agencies doing more with much less. Even when the actual costs of cross-agency collaboration are accounted for, it is often the most promising path to increased efficiency, effectiveness and accountability so it is important to think about true costs. What follow are some of the promising tools and processes used to collaborate across agencies.

#### **E. Tool: Interagency Agreements**

Cooperative, or interagency, agreements are noted here as a “tool,” but the term fails to capture their pervasiveness and importance in federal agencies. The range of collaboration types and variants noted in this study suggest that there are significant variations in the types of interagency agreements required for cross-agency collaborations to develop. These include agreements regarding information and data, funds and resources, sharing personnel and, of course, interpretations and flexibilities with respect to statutory and regulatory requirements. Agency general counsel and attorneys may be challenged to incorporate sufficient expertise to knowledgeably develop interagency agreements across the range of specialized areas required.

The research conducted for the present study leads me to endorse the recommendations put forth by Freeman and Rossi in a recent ACUS study and to agree with the alternative vehicles for their adoption. Freeman and Rossi recommended:

[A] comprehensive executive branch effort to promote stronger interagency coordination and improve coordination instruments. .... [as well as] some more targeted reforms ... [such as] development of agency policies on coordination, sharing of best practices, ex post evaluation of at least a subset of coordination processes, and tracking of outcomes and costs. These reforms could be adopted in a new Executive Order on agency coordination; added as amendments to existing Executive Order 12866 or 13563; adopted as part of the [OMBs] implementation of [GPRAMA] or prescribed by Congress via statute. Agencies might also voluntarily adopt a number of these reforms. We propose that ACUS recommend each of these options as alternatives.

The specific details and variation emphasized in the present study are meant to move the discussion of interagency agreements, and other tools, forward beyond general prescriptions to specific recommendation and plans of action.

An official at OMB tasked with leading and facilitating cross-agency initiatives lamented the lack of capacity among attorneys to engage in cross-agency legal analysis:

It's been hard. This goes along with [lack of] capacity. There's very little capacity that understands, that looks at the nexus across agency legal requirements. I facilitate discussions with attorneys across agencies. They always come at this from their own agency's perspective. I wish they would look more broadly. The old hands who have seen so much know how other agencies work. But turnover makes them rare.

In a discussion of what he would recommend to build capacity for collaboration, this official continued:

I wish I had a team [of lawyers] that could harmonize legal structures. The attorneys are all bogged down in their own agencies with far too much work and responsibility and have not time to think about interagency.

If the federal government is to increase cross-agency collaboration, the volume of interagency agreements is likely to grow, placing a burden on agency general counsel and attorneys. Given the high turnover rate in these offices, lack of experience may exacerbate agency-centric thinking and resistance to engaging broader analysis required for cross-agency projects. The loss of institutional memory and know-how among agency attorneys lost through turnover is a major loss to government capacity. It will be essential for agency general counsel and attorneys to find ways to increase skill and rapidity in the production of interagency agreements without loss of quality. This is a problem that merits serious examination government-wide and a plan of action.

Many agencies have developed handbooks and other tools to guide the writing of interagency and other special agreements. For example, the Army has a clearly and simply written "Reference Tool," called "Interagency Agreements" that in 21 pages covers core information needed to make decisions. Commerce has published a handbook, "Interim Interagency and Other Special Agreements Handbook," that is 66 pages long.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> The Commerce handbook lists "government-wide and DOC sources which are used as appropriate with an IAA includes, but is not limited to [sic], the following: Case-Zablocki Act (1 USC § 112b); Clinger-Cohen Act (40 USC § 1412(e)); Department-wide "Special Studies" Statute (15 USC § 1525, 1st Paragraph); Economy Act (31 USC § 1535); Federal Technology Transfer Act (15 USC § 3701a); Government-wide User Charge (31 USC § 9701); Intergovernmental Cooperation Act (31 USC § 6505); Joint Project Authority (15 USC § 1525, 2nd Paragraph); Federal Acquisition Regulation (48 CFR 16.505 and 48 CFR 17.500); Government Patent Licensing (35 USC § 207); Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961 (MECEA), 22 U.S.C. § 2245(f), as incorporated into specific operating unit appropriations acts; Government Management Reform Act (Public Law 103-356); Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-25, User Charges; OMB Circular A-76, Performance of Commercial Activities; OMB Circular A-76 Revised Supplemental Handbook to the Circular (Revised March 1996); OMB Circular A-97, Rules and Regulations Permitting Federal Agencies to Provide Specialized or Technical Services to

An attorney in Commerce, interviewed for this study, commented: “Everyone knows how to do this. This is how we collaborate. . . . We get in the room and work things out. Don’t formalize this or get OMB involved.”

Interior is composed of several bureaus that often have to work together to reach compromises, including in rulemaking. Program managers, policy specialists and agency attorneys in the Department are accustomed to working across their respective agencies, and with those in related departments, to negotiate agreements. An attorney and executive at Interior, interviewed for this study, concluded:

The point is you can’t write an executive order that will solve this. You have to rely on the agency level and that it’s in their best interest to come up with an approach that is accepted by both sides. We’re not like the IRS who can go out and be arbitrary. We have too many sides to issues. We have no choice but to try and collaborate.

While this sentiment was reiterated across several agencies, it ignores the very real likelihood that the volume and possibly the complexity of interagency agreements will increase as government reform moves in the direction of tackling problems that lie inherently across agencies. Handbooks, while useful, will be insufficient to the challenge. More is needed to develop the skills and experience of agency general counsel and attorneys for cross-agency collaboration. Perhaps in the same way that professional development and rotations are recommended for program managers, similar development might be furthered for agency lawyers given the centrality of their role in cross-agency collaboration.

#### **F. Tool: Build Virtual Agencies<sup>184</sup>**

Former Vice President Al Gore coined the term “virtual agencies” to mean shared websites on which federal agencies sharing jurisdiction for similar client groups – e.g., students, senior citizens, business – would co-locate relevant information and services.<sup>185</sup> The concept emphasized the time, effort and risk required to implement government reorganization in the “bricks and mortar” of federal agencies. These early efforts have continued and underlie many current efforts to develop virtual agencies. But the early concept has blossomed beyond its genesis in the early 1990s to more commonly mean partnerships across agencies to pursue joint goals and activities.

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State and Local Units of Government under Title III of the Intergovernmental and Cooperation Act of 1968; OMB Circular A-130, Management of Federal Information Resources, Section 8(a)(1)(k)(7)(c) and Appendix IV, Section 8(a)(7); DAO 218-4, Treaties and Other International Agreements Supplementary Handbook on the C-175 Process for Routine International and Technology Agreements; DOC Accounting Principles and Standards Handbook; OMB Business Rules for Intragovernmental Exchange Transactions.

<sup>184</sup> J. Christopher Mihm, “Virtual Reorganization: Results Mapping and Collaboration,” *The Public Manager*, Summer 2011, p. 43; Fountain, 2001, *supra*; Kamensky, *supra*.

<sup>185</sup> I examined the early development of Business.gov and the International Trade Data System, among other cases of virtual agencies and their legal, operational and political challenges in Fountain, 2001, *supra*. Similar challenges continue to confront development of virtual agencies in the present.

### **G. Tool: Conduct Cross-Agency Process Mapping<sup>186</sup>**

Process mapping, or results mapping, is essential to analysis of processes that lie across agency boundaries. Chris Mihm argues: “Federal reorganization should be more focused on creating and sustaining what has been referred to as “virtual organizations” that use collaboration mechanisms to knit together various related programs and efforts that cut across federal agencies, levels of government, and even sectors.”<sup>187</sup> The rapid response team that undertook to reform permitting and review for large infrastructure projects used process mapping to identify steps in their respective operations that could be better coordinated, particularly from the perspective of clients. Interviews with OMB and PIC staff also note the importance of examining the steps in administrative and other processes to identify precisely how agencies might coordinate when their operations include interdependencies. Experts in performance evaluation know “process mapping” and similar tools as logic modeling. Indeed, evaluation research offers knowledge and tools to be tapped for performance management.

### **H. Tool: GSA Templates**

GSA provides a stunning array of services, programs and templates to agencies. They are an important resource for cross-agency goal leaders in organizing and “standing up” new projects. GSA has an office to help create interagency councils and they have produced several templates of MOUs for a variety of issues, e.g., establishing a task force, managing office space, IT, contracting authority. These resources may be especially useful to agency attorneys.

### **I. Tool: Joint Grant-making**

The case study of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities describes the joint grant-making developed by HUD and DOT to enable communities to submit one proposal to one request for proposals that was funded by two agencies. Those awarded grants could either win HUD funding, DOT funding or both. The agencies did not commingle funds but did streamline and consolidate the proposal and the application process. They jointly conducted reviews of proposals with each agency maintaining criteria, expertise and other agency-specific activities. Ironically, the funding for the program was lost after the initial round of grant-making, but the knowledge needed to use such a program again remains in the agencies. The tool and its development might also be shared more widely to other agencies.

### **J. Tool: Shared Budgets**

An OMB official lamented the challenges of shared budgets: “We see hundreds of the following cases. Two agencies are doing things separately. But if they did this together, it would be so much more efficient from a government-wide perspective. We see this all the time. Two agencies are both building a GIS system. They [OMB] were pushing them to collaborate, but it was almost impossible to do. They can’t buy services for the other agency. There are a lot of restrictions [in the Economy Act]. We wish we had the ability to step in and say ‘there is a

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<sup>186</sup> J. C. Mihm, *supra*.

<sup>187</sup> *Id.*

compelling case. We're going to take money from both their accounts and build something that serves both of their needs.' ”

His recommendation for a tool that would facilitate shared budgetary authority: “The OMB director may transfer up to XX amount in total on an annual basis across accounts in order to achieve government-wide efficiencies in a way that must be beneficial to agencies that are trying to achieve a [particular goal]. The OMB Director must report within 15 days before a transfer is going to occur and unless they hear from Congress, they can do it.” But this type of authority might be abused. Nevertheless, these ideas merit debate among OMB, agencies and Congress.

A report published by the Congressional Research Service examines in detail the elements of crosscut budgets in terms of purposes, design, scope, tracking, submissions and updates, accuracy, consistency and responsibility. It provides detailed descriptions of two projects using cross-cut budgets: the Everglades Crosscut Budget and the CALFED Bay-Delta Program Crosscut Budget.<sup>188</sup>

Asked about the potential of cross-cut budgets for cross-agency collaboration, an OMB executive working closely with interagency projects commented in an interview:

I go back and forth on when to institutionalize a framework and when you act on very specific things. On the question of budget crosscuts, I tend to say pick the limited number of things that really matter and do those crosscuts. Because the amount of time that goes into creating a framework and working on the most complex cases isn't worth it. So set your priorities, do it for those, and then if you have capacity, go ahead and institutionalize it ... Focus on the goal and achieving the outcomes.

## **K. Tools for Building Local Level Collaboration**

### ***1. Limits of Formal Authority***

One internationally known public management expert on being asked in an interview for this study how the Secretaries or Deputy Secretaries foster interagency coordination said, “At that level, they simply say ‘it shall be done’ and it’s done. One could only wish this were true.”<sup>189</sup> Food safety is one example. Indeed, Congress specifically authorized FDA to enter into interagency agreements and to develop shared methods and processes to enhance food safety, but the implementation is highly complex and, at best, a slow process. Exports is another example of

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<sup>188</sup> Pervaze A. Sheikh and Clinton T. Brass, “Crosscut Budgets in Ecosystem Restoration Initiatives: Examples and Issues for Congress” CRS Report for Congress, January 22, 2008.

[digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc96799/m1/1/high\\_res\\_d/RL34329\\_2008Jan22.pdf](https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc96799/m1/1/high_res_d/RL34329_2008Jan22.pdf)

<sup>189</sup> Chester Barnard, *Functions of the Executive*, observed that leadership only extends as far as followers allow it to extend. President Truman’s well-known quip, “I spend all day trying to get people to do what they are supposed to be doing,” underscores the limits of formal authority.

the limits of formal authority, even at the level of the Chief Executive, to compel change through edict.

While formal authority is potent, it is limited. Formal authority is a necessary but not sufficient condition for making the changes needed to build interagency collaboration. Plans that rely unrealistically on assumptions about formal authority are not well supported by evidence.

The Federal Executive Boards (FEBs), established by Presidential Directive in 1961, are “a forum for communication and collaboration among Federal agencies outside of Washington, DC.” The description of the FEB reads: “The need for effective coordination among the field activities of Federal departments and agencies was then, and is still, very clear. Approximately 85 percent of all Federal employees work outside the National Capital Region. Federal programs have their impact largely through the actions of the field representatives of the departments and agencies. In addition, Federal representatives are the principal contact with the Federal Government for the citizens of the United States. The National network of 28 FEBs, located in areas of significant Federal populations, serves as the cornerstone for strategic partnering in Government.”<sup>190</sup>

## *2. Joint Outreach*

The case studies in this report demonstrate that leaders in many cross-agency collaborations conduct joint outreach to model collaboration and to address concerns in the field jointly. Mark Johnston of HUD commented on the power of example when the Deputy Secretaries of HUD and VA visit regions together, modeling collective behavior. Leadership of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities make a point of appearing and conducting visible activities as a team. The CAP Exports project group also found joint outreach essential for their own shared learning and for building collaboration in the regions and the field.

## *3. One-stop Shops*

Co-location of agency offices and staff remains a powerful tool for increasing collaboration across boundaries. Terms such as “no wrong door” and “joined-up government” imply physical co-location as well as digital and service integration. HUD used waivers in order to co-locate case and program managers in local communities of care during boot camps. They report that many managers have worked in the same building for several years but had never met one another or interacted professionally. The CAP Exports project has established jointly operated and staffed export promotion offices. They have co-located the various agencies as a way to simplify processes for businesses, especially small businesses, which would like to export.

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<sup>190</sup> Presidential Directive 465: Memorandum on the Need for Greater Coordination of Regional and Field Activities of the Government, November 10, 1961. The Federal Executive Board website is available at [www.feb.gov](http://www.feb.gov).

#### **4. Joint Training**

Some agencies are collaborating on the development of training. They make their training materials consistent across agencies. Boot camps are a particular type of training that have had a powerful influence.

##### **L. Tool: Boot Camps for Lawyers**

While the HUD-VA boot campus have been discussed in the case study, attorneys have used “boot campus” to apprise one another about new contractual vehicles and arrangements.

The Department of Energy conducted what one executive called a “boot camp” for the attorneys in DOT on Energy Savings Performance Contracts.<sup>191</sup> This collaboration tool relates to the Energy Efficiency CAP goal. The training was conducted over the phone on a conference call. It provided enough information and know-how to allow DOT attorneys to commit to and embrace new tools, developed at DOE and important for energy efficiency in government buildings. The cross-agency collaboration here was episodic, related to sharing expertise. The term “boot camp” here is used because the information transfer was not part of a formal training program or webinar, but put together because an agency executive asked another agency for it.

##### **M. Digital Tools**

###### **1. Varieties of Websites that Support or Reflect Collaboration**

Shared websites, also called “virtual agencies,” are powerful and widely used tools. But their quality and effectiveness varies. Initial development is easier than continued maintenance, updates and inevitable upgrades. The Partnership for Sustainable Communities has a very well designed and clearly well utilized website including webinars and a range of training tools for local level actors. Other websites have readily searchable access to interagency memoranda.

###### **2. Harmonizing terminology and definitions of terms**

The need to harmonize definitions of terms and usage as a critical step in developing cross-agency collaboration was noted in several interviews. In fact, it was probably the dominant theme in interviews after the challenges posed to cross-agency collaboration by appropriations

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<sup>191</sup> The executive memorandum of December 2, 2011 committed the Federal Government to enter into a total of \$2 billion in energy savings performance contracts (ESPCs) and utility energy savings contracts (UESCs). The memorandum helped agencies to achieve goals set in an earlier Executive Order, “Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance,” October 5, 2009 setting sustainability goals and energy improvements for Federal agencies. Presidential Memorandum. Implementation of Energy Savings Projects and Performance-Based Contracting for Energy Savings. December 2, 2011. [www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/12/02/presidential-memorandum-implementation-energy-savings-projects-and-perfo](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/12/02/presidential-memorandum-implementation-energy-savings-projects-and-perfo); Executive Order 13514, “Leadership in Environmental, Energy and Economic Performance, October 5, 2009. Available at [www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/2009fedleader\\_eo\\_rel.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/2009fedleader_eo_rel.pdf).

and authorizations processes. A promising recent example is data exchange standardization in human services required by statute.<sup>192</sup>

Competitive grants may be used to provide incentives and resources for integrating systems. The Partnership Fund for Program Integrity Innovation awarded a total of \$8 million to seven states through one-year Interoperability Innovation Grants, “to develop and implement improved information technology (IT) systems interoperability and integration in eligibility and enrollment, case management, and other related systems.” The focus of the systems is human services for children and families. Grants were awarded, in part, on a state’s ability to benefit other states with its work.<sup>193</sup> Although these were federal grants offered to state governments, this example highlights once again the necessity to build local level capacity for cross-agency collaboration in order to implement federal policy and to achieve federal-level goals.

Federal specialists in regions may collaborate to harmonize data. The “Interagency Ecological Site Handbook for Rangelands” is the output of one such collaboration.<sup>194</sup>

### 3. *Cross-agency Integrated Databases*

Some agencies have recognized the necessity of data drawn from various agency sources and have coordinated to produce and jointly use integrated databases. For example: the Landscape Conservation Cooperative establishes<sup>22</sup> ecosystem regions within which federal agencies coordinate with other government levels, NGOs, universities and colleges “to

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<sup>192</sup> For example, the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 states: “The Secretary of Labor [and the Secretary of HHS for TANF], in consultation with an interagency work group which shall be established by the Office of Management and Budget, and considering State and employer perspectives, shall, by rule, designate a data exchange standard . . .”

<sup>193</sup> “OMB Partnership Fund Pilot: State Systems Interoperability and Integration (S2I2) Grant Project” ACF HHS. [www.acf.hhs.gov/omb-partnership-fund-pilot-state-systems-interoperability-and](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/omb-partnership-fund-pilot-state-systems-interoperability-and)

<sup>194</sup> “The Rangeland Interagency Ecological Site Manual identifies the establishment of an interagency, interdisciplinary workgroup. A national interagency workgroup . . . develops and recommends policy, procedures, and data management for the development and use of ecological site descriptions.” (p. 8)

The Interagency Ecological Site Handbook for Rangelands was developed to implement the policy outlined in the Rangeland Interagency Ecological Site Manual. This policy provides direction to Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Forest Service (FS), and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to cooperatively identify and describe rangeland ecological sites for use in inventory, monitoring, evaluation, and management of the Nation’s rangelands. This is a response, in part, to direction from Congress in the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2002. In that Appropriations Act, Congress expected the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to prepare a coordinated plan and budget that would identify the cost of completing standardized soil surveys and ecological classification on all rangeland for use at local management levels. This interagency handbook promulgates ecological sites as the component of ecological classification at local management levels (USDI and USDA 2003). “The BLM, FS, and NRCS have a common objective of utilizing science-based technical processes to sustain and enhance natural resources and the environment. . . . Their jurisdictions are intermingled throughout much of the United States, including both private and public lands; therefore, a standardized method to define, delineate, and describe terrestrial ecological sites is more efficient than each agency having their own method.” (Handbook, p. 6) Interagency Ecological Site. Handbook for Rangelands. January 2013. [directives.sc.gov.usda.gov/OpenNonWebContent.aspx?content=33943.wba](http://directives.sc.gov.usda.gov/OpenNonWebContent.aspx?content=33943.wba).



coordinate data, identify information gaps, and develop shared strategies for generating and using scientific information.”<sup>195</sup>

#### **4. Virtual Events**

Virtual events allow agencies to reduce travel and other costs and often provide greater access to important gatherings via videoconferencing and online collaboration tools. While there are losses from lack of face-to-face opportunities for interaction, they are greatly outweighed by the cost savings and additional accessibility of virtual events.<sup>196</sup>

#### **5. Cloud Computing**

Another enormous development about which reams have been written – cloud computing – is strongly supported by the Chief Information Officer and the OMB Office of IT and E-Government, which has established working groups and initiatives, as well as offered guidance, to agencies to speed innovation in this area. Cloud computing offers agencies a means to use secure, remote computer servers for data storage, thus offering significant cost savings. Cloud computing has the potential to help agencies develop secure shared data and services by lowering cost, design and some administrative barriers. Cloud computing greatly reduces the initial cost because the government no longer needs to build systems. This, according to one interviewee, should remove a strong barrier to cross-agency system use.

#### **6. Open Data**

Executive level open data directives have been elevated in 2013 to a new federal CAP goal for mission support. Open data guidance encourages agencies to make their data and datasets publicly available online in a format that is easily downloaded and used by others. These provisions will help agencies to share data.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> See Interior, Landscape Conservation Cooperatives [Secretarial Order No. 3289](#) establishes LCCs, “a network of public-private partnerships that provide shared science to ensure the sustainability of America’s land, water, wildlife and cultural resources.” See <http://www.doi.gov/lcc/index.cfm>; and the integrated mapping tool LANDFIRE (a effort to develop and make available “seamless multi-layer data set maps and information relevant to fire management and fuels treatment decisions.” The tool “layers” spatial data drawn from maps and datasets of several federal, state and local government agencies, academic institutions, and others. See [http://www.landfire.gov/participate\\_refdata\\_sub.php](http://www.landfire.gov/participate_refdata_sub.php). Citing NAS, Sustainability for America, 2013.

<sup>196</sup> Brittany Ballenstedt, “Agencies are Saving Millions with Virtual Events,” NextGov, August 22, 2013. [www.nextgov.com/cio-briefing/wired-workplace/2013/08/virtual-events-help-agencies-save-big/69161/](http://www.nextgov.com/cio-briefing/wired-workplace/2013/08/virtual-events-help-agencies-save-big/69161/).

<sup>197</sup> Performance.gov; President’s Memorandum on Open Government; OMB. Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies. Open Government Directive, 2009. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/open/documents/open-government-directive>.

## XI. CONCLUSION

This study offers a preliminary sketch of promising avenues to promote cross-agency collaboration under GPRAMA. The brevity of the research period and data collection efforts mean that the recommendations and findings are necessarily suggestive rather than conclusive. We do not yet have evidence to attach to each of the tools and lessons. Yet narratives of promising practice have face validity and a certain persuasive power. Moreover, the study draws upon several years of research and case histories not reported herein of cross-agency collaboration. It is hoped that this report represents the first of a stream of such studies that will be needed to build an adequate and prescriptively useful knowledge base for policymakers and government officials increasingly working across agency boundaries.

The U.S. federal government, from its founding and by explicit design through the Federalists and other 18<sup>th</sup> Century leaders, has been fragmented with decision-making and other powers divided, by design, based on the Constitution, statutes, rules, practice and politics. The balance of powers and fragmented authority across the branches of government and across federal agencies were meant to thwart potential efforts to centralize power. While this initial institutional design served its purpose in preventing a monarchy and usurpation of citizens' power. However, as the constitutional design has been filled out with legislation, some of these statutory institutional arrangements may have outlived their usefulness in an increasingly interconnected world in which resources also are increasingly constrained. On the other hand, the ability of agencies and programs to devise means to achieve important purposes in a decentralized way offers "pilot projects" and experimentation that, if harvested and shared, can be a powerful lever for innovation.

GPRAMA is part of the ongoing development of the administrative state in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. To gain effectiveness, efficiencies, accountability and, perhaps, a strengthening of democracy through greater use of cross-agency collaboration is a challenge that will continue for several decades played out over the next several presidential administrations. The GPRA Modernization Act is the law, but the use made of it by executives will be open to interpretation. Shifting terminology including reinvention, enterprise, boundarylessness, horizontal governance, and much more tends to obscure as much as to illuminate. Lacking are clear distinctions among types, purposes, scope and other key dimensions of cross-agency collaboration. To date, we lack clear theories, a stream of empirical research and case studies that can offer guidance to reflective practitioners, to the executive and to Congress. This study is an initial and modest step in the service of building such knowledge.

## APPENDIX 1: STUDY INTERVIEWS

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Interview Type</b>
GSA	11/04/13	Sr. Official	Phone interview
DOE	10/30/13	Sr. Official*	Phone interview
GSA	10/30/13	Sr. Officials	Phone interview
OMB	10/23/13	Sr. Official	Phone interview
OMB	10/16/13	Sr. Official*	Phone interview
EOP	10/08/13	Sr. Official*	Phone interview
FDA	09/23/13	Sr. Officials	Phone interview
Census	09/13/13	Sr. Official	In person
CFPB	08/23/13	Policy Specialist	Emails
CRS	06/14/13	Coordinator, Specialist	Emails; Phone interview
DOE	08/26/13	Sr. Official	Phone interview
DOT	07/24/13	Sr. Official	Phone interview
DOT	08/23/13	Sr. Official	Phone interview
DOT	08/28/13	Policy Advisor	Phone interview
DOT	08/28/13	Policy Analyst	Phone interview (see above)
DOT	08/28/13	Policy Analyst	Phone interview (see above)
DOT	09/05/13	Sr. Official	Phone interview
EOP	07/01/13	Sr. Official*	Phone interview
GAO	06/14/13	Sr. Official	Phone interview
GAO	06/14/13	Sr. Analyst	Phone interview (see above)
GAO	06/14/13	Sr. Analyst	Phone interview (see above)
GAO	06/14/13	Sr. Analyst	Phone interview (see above)
GAO	06/14/13	Sr. Analyst	Phone interview (see above)
GSA	08/30/13	Sr. Manager	Emails; Phone interview
GSA	08/01/13	Sr. Staff	Phone interview
GSA	07/24/13	Sr. Official	Phone interview
GSA	07/24/13	Sr. Official	Phone interview (see above)
HUD	09/06/13	Sr. Official	Phone interview
Interior	08/29/13	Sr. Official	Phone interview
Interior	08/29/13	Sr. Staff	Phone interview (see above)
OMB	07/25/13	Sr. Official*	Phone interview
OMB	07/25/13	Sr. Official*	In person
OMB	06/21/13	Sr. Official*	In person
OMB	06/21/13	Sr. Official*	In person (brief)
OMB	06/21/13	Sr. Official*	In person; Phone; Email
OMB	08/12/13	Sr. Official*	Phone interview
OMB	06/14/13	Sr. Official	Phone interview

OMB	6/14/13; 8/16/13	Sr. Official	Phone interview (2)
University	various	Professor	Emails

(*Note*: Asterisk indicates former federal official.)

## APPENDIX 2: INTERIM MISSION-ORIENTED CAP GOAL DESCRIPTIONS

The list below describes the seven mission-oriented cross-agency priority (CAP) goals named in the FY2013 Budget. This represents one-half of the fourteen CAP goals. The other seven CAP goals are mission-support goals.

### A. Exports

**Goal Statement:** Double U.S. exports by the end of 2014.

**Goal Leader:** Michael Froman, Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor for International Economic Affairs

**Description:** In January 2010, the President launched the National Export Initiative (NEI) with the ambitious goal of doubling U.S. exports over five years. While exports are fundamentally driven by the private sector, the Federal Government has an important role to play in helping U.S. exporters, especially small- and medium-sized exporters, overcome the obstacles that make it more difficult to sell their goods and services abroad. These challenges include lack of sufficient information about exporting and foreign markets, challenges to obtaining adequate export financing, and unfair competition from foreign trade partners. Through implementation of this goal, the Administration will continue to make progress on its commitment to improving advocacy and trade promotion efforts on behalf of U.S. exporters, increasing access to export financing, removing barriers to trade, enforcing our trade rules, and promoting strong, sustainable, and balanced growth in the global economy.

### B. Entrepreneurship and Small Business

**Goal Statement:** Increase federal services to entrepreneurs and small businesses with an emphasis on 1) startups and growing firms and 2) underserved markets.

**Goal Leaders:** Jason Furman, Principal Deputy Director, White House National Economic Council; Tom Kalil, Deputy Director for Technology and Innovation, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy

**Description:** “[What] we want to do is to make sure that every single agency, even as they’re tending to their energy initiatives or providing homeland security or transportation or defense, that we’re also thinking about how are we’re advancing the cause of giving small businesses and entrepreneurs opportunities to start creating the next Google or the next Apple or the next innovative company that’s going to create jobs and improve our economy.”--President Barack Obama, Cabinet meeting, January 31, 2012  
Entrepreneurs and small businesses are the engines of American innovation and our economic success, and President Obama is committed to helping them grow and prosper. Our nation’s small businesses employ over 60 million Americans, or half of the private sector workforce, and account for roughly 60 percent of gross job creation. Moreover, expanding enterprises less than 5 years old have been responsible for nearly all net job creation in the United States during the last 30 years, with a relatively small number of

rapidly growing companies generating an outsized share of new jobs – in every industry and across the country. Two of America’s greatest assets are the economic dynamism of our small businesses and the diversity of our entrepreneurs. To maximize our competitive advantage as a nation, we must ensure that, with hard work, American entrepreneurs have the opportunity to find the capital, training, and market access they need to start and grow their businesses. This vision of inclusive entrepreneurship is at the core of the President’s plan to create an economy built to last. Across the Federal government, a range of diverse programs already serve the needs of startups and small businesses. The White House Startup America initiative focuses on accelerating high-growth entrepreneurship throughout the Nation, and the White House report *Moving America’s Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs Forward* describes the Administration’s full spectrum of efforts to promote small business success. Through the Cross Agency Priority Goal, the Administration will work to better coordinate, streamline, and evaluate existing programs, as well as catalyze new efforts to improve support to our entrepreneurs and innovators. The action plan described below will better serve all of America’s small businesses and emphasize those measures that enable a greater diversity of entrepreneurs to start and grow companies faster. For example, many innovative small firms with high growth potential can benefit from faster commercialization of federally funded research or more streamlined Federal procurement. At the same time, Federal agencies will measure their effectiveness in making these and other opportunities available to underrepresented entrepreneurs. America’s entrepreneurial spirit is a beacon of opportunity and prosperity. Last year, entrepreneurs in the United States were more optimistic about their job creation prospects than in any other advanced economy, with entrepreneurial activity on the rise across the country. By focusing on a government-wide strategy to improve services for these job-creating firms, the Administration will help widen America’s lead as the most entrepreneurial and competitive country in the world.

### **C. Broadband**

**Goal Statement:** As part of expanding all broadband capabilities, ensure 4G wireless broadband coverage for 98 percent of Americans by 2016.

**Goal Leader:** Tom Power, Deputy Chief Technology Officer, White House Telecommunications, Office of Science and Technology Policy

**Description:** President Obama has outlined a bold vision for enhancing America’s competitiveness by investing in broadband infrastructure. "By connecting every corner of our country to the digital age, we can help our businesses become more competitive, our students become more informed and our citizens become more engaged," he said. Broadband access provides a strong foundation for economic growth, job creation, and global competitiveness. Among other benefits, maximizing Americans’ access to broadband technology can change how we deliver health care, improve public safety, and make government more efficient. This goal reinforces current efforts by federal agencies to deliver on the Administration’s broadband commitment. Special attention will be directed to rural areas, which lag behind other parts of the country in broadband access. Achieving the goal of extending advanced 4G wireless coverage to 98 percent of Americans will strengthen the nation’s broadband system – networks, devices, content, and applications – to provide the nation a competitive, affordable, and efficient technology infrastructure.

## **D. Energy Efficiency**

**Goal Statement:** Reduce Energy Intensity (energy demand/\$ real GDP) 50 percent by 2035 (2010 as base year).

**Goal Leader:** Heather Zichal, Deputy Assistant to the President for Energy and Climate Change, White House Domestic Policy Council

**Description:** Increasing energy efficiency is one of the least expensive and most cost-effective ways to enhance the nation's energy security, save money for American households, reduce our dependence on oil, and ensure a clean environment. Initiatives to reduce energy intensity are often low-cost relative to the alternative of developing additional power generation, and the upfront investments in efficiency programs can pay for themselves in energy savings within a few years. This Cross-Agency Priority Goal is an effort to gradually reduce the total energy consumed in the United States each year through 2035, from a 2010 base year of 98 Quads (quadrillion BTUs), while the economy, measured by our Gross Domestic Product (GDP), continues to grow at a healthy rate.

Thus, while the population and sectors such as housing, American manufacturing, and high-tech industrial operations continue to expand the level and quality of service provided, the country will consume less energy as a whole due to efficiency gains in our buildings, transportation, industry, and federal operations.

## **E. Veteran Career Readiness**

**Goal Statement:** Improve career readiness of veterans. By September 30, 2013, increase the percent of eligible service members who will be served by career readiness and preparedness programs from 50 percent to 90 percent in order to improve their competitiveness in the job market.

**Goal Leader** Rosye B. Cloud, White House Policy Director of Veteran and Wounded Warriors and Military Families, National Security /Domestic Policy Council.

**Description:** Having successfully served and defended our nation, our veterans are well-trained, highly skilled, and ready to enter the general workforce. With the experience and skills they gained in the service, they are a tremendous source of value to any workplace, school, or community they choose to join.

Data on separating service members shows that less than 50 percent participate in transition programs geared toward preparing them for civilian careers. The Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) Act of 2011 requires that 100 percent of eligible separating service members receive transition assistance. The updated job-seeking tools will assist separating service members in the often difficult task of translating their military specialties into comparable

private sector parlance. Also, veterans should be able to capitalize on the educational opportunities provided by the GI Bill to build or enter careers of their choosing. Measuring progress is a challenge as there is no standardized system to track separating veterans that would allow a deeper understanding of the problems they might face in the labor market.

This goal focuses on implementing the President's commitment to improve career readiness, reduce veteran unemployment, and put veterans to work. To create conditions for success, the White House economic and domestic policy teams have partnered with the Departments of Defense (DOD), Veterans Affairs (VA), and Labor to form a task force to design and implement strategies to increase the career readiness of all service members.

## **F. STEM Education**

**Goal Statement:** In support of the President's goal that the U.S. have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by 2020, the Federal Government will work with education partners to improve the quality of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education at all levels to help increase the number of well-prepared graduates with STEM degrees by one-third over the next 10 years, resulting in an additional 1 million graduates with degrees in STEM subjects.

**Goal Leader:** Steve Robinson, Special Assistant, White House Domestic Policy Council

**Description:** A number of economic and labor analyses suggest that if the United States is to maintain its global preeminence in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)—and benefit from the social, economic, and national security advantages that come with such preeminence—then it must produce approximately 1 million more STEM professionals than are projected to graduate over the next decade. To meet this goal, the United States institutions of higher education will need to increase the number of students who receive undergraduate STEM degrees by about 34 percent over current rates by 2020.

## **G. Job Training**

**Goal Statement:** Ensure our country has one of the most skilled workforces in the world by preparing 2 million workers with skills training by 2015 and improving the coordination and delivery of job training services.

**Goal Leader:** Portia Wu, Special Assistant to the President for Labor and Workforce Policy, White House Domestic Policy Council; **Deputy Goal Leader:** Guy Johnson, Senior Policy Advisor, White House Domestic Policy Council.

**Description:** A skilled workforce is key to U.S. competitiveness in the global economy. In the coming years, our nation will have millions of skilled positions in industries ranging from healthcare to advanced manufacturing, green energy to information technology, and many of these jobs will be high-skilled jobs. Having access to high-quality job training is essential for workers to succeed in the growing and changing U.S. economy, and for the U.S. to remain a global economic leader.



To address these issues, this goal brings together the multiple Federal agencies that support job training to improve the quality and coordination of Federal job training programs. The Administration has announced a comprehensive plan to improve our workforce development system, including proposals to enhance services available to workers who have lost their jobs, expanding investment in community colleges and their partnerships with businesses and communities to train skilled workers, and reinvigorating American Job Centers around the country that help people make smart choices about what training to pursue. The Administration will also continue several ongoing efforts to support the testing and replication of innovative and evidence-based approaches to job training through the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training grants and the Workforce Innovation Fund. These efforts also include a focus on enhancing program coordination, performance reporting, and overall accountability among agencies that operate job training programs. These improvements will increase both the efficiency and effectiveness of the federal job training system so that American workers can get the training, skills, and credentials they need to hold the jobs of the future.

## APPENDIX 3: MISSION-ORIENTED CAP GOALS: ASSOCIATED PROGRAMS AND AGENCIES

### A. Exports: Double U.S. exports by the end of 2014

#### 1. Partial list of associated APGs and policy developments

As part of this effort, some agencies have set priority goals to facilitate the implementation of the NEI in FY 2012 and FY 2013. Examples of these goals include:

- **Department of Commerce** priority goal to increase the number of new markets entered by client firms served by the International Trade Administration by 7 percent. To learn more, see the Department of Commerce (DOC) Priority Goal: [http://my-goals.performance.gov/goal\\_detail/DOC/339](http://my-goals.performance.gov/goal_detail/DOC/339)
- **Department of Agriculture** priority goal to expand nominal U.S. agricultural exports to \$150 billion by FY 2013. To learn more, see the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Priority Goal: [http://my-goals.performance.gov/goal\\_detail/USDA/341](http://my-goals.performance.gov/goal_detail/USDA/341)
- **Department of State** priority goal to increase its market oriented export activities in foreign markets by 15 percent. (See [http://my-goals.performance.gov/goal\\_detail/DOSUSAID/399](http://my-goals.performance.gov/goal_detail/DOSUSAID/399)).

To further support the goals of the NEI, the President issued a Memorandum on February 17, 2012, directing the EPC and the TPCC to develop strategies and initiatives to better facilitate the Administration's global trade and investment objectives, and in particular, to:

(a) evaluate the allocation of Federal Government resources to assist with trade financing, negotiation, enforcement, and promotion, as well as the encouragement of foreign investment in the United States; and

(b) take steps to ensure the most efficient use of its members' domestic and foreign offices and distribution networks, including: co-locating offices wherever appropriate; and cross-training staff to better serve business customers at home and abroad by promoting exports to foreign countries and foreign investment in the United States.<sup>198</sup>

#### 2. Associated Programs and Agencies

Programs contributing in part or in whole to this goal include the following. Other programs with potential to contribute to this goal may be identified over time.

##### Department of Agriculture:

- Foreign Agriculture Service

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<sup>198</sup> Source: [goals.performance.gov/sites/default/files/images/Exports\\_CAP\\_Goal-FY2013\\_Quarter3.pdf](http://goals.performance.gov/sites/default/files/images/Exports_CAP_Goal-FY2013_Quarter3.pdf)

- Foreign Market Development Program
- Market Access Program
- Export Credit Guarantee Program
- Emerging Markets Program
- Supplier Credit Export Program
- Agricultural Marketing Service

**Department of Commerce:**

- International Trade Administration;
- Market Access and Compliance
- Import Administration
- Manufacturing and Services
- U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service
  - Trade Promotion Programs
  - District Export Councils
  - SelectUSA
  - Strategic Partnership Programs
  - Market Development Cooperator Program
  - Advocacy Center

**Department of Defense Department of Energy**

**Department of Homeland**

**Security Department of Interior**

**Department of State:**

- U.S. Embassies and Consulates
- Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs
- Trade Policy and Programs
- Commercial and Business Affairs

**Department of Transportation**

**Environmental Protection Agency**

**Export-Import Bank:**

- Working Capital Guarantee Program
- Export Credit Insurance
- Loan Guarantee & Direct Loan Program
- Finance Lease Guarantees Program

**Overseas Private Investment Corporation:**

- Small and Medium-Enterprise Financing
- Structured Financing
- Investment Insurance
- Investment Funds
- Enterprise Development Network

**Small Business Administration:**

- Office of International Trade
- Small Business Development Centers
- Export Legal Assistance Network
- Export Express and International Trade Loan Programs
- Export Working Capital Program U.S. Agency for International Development

**U.S. Trade and Development Agency:**

- Project Development Program
- International Business Partnership Program

**Office of the U.S. Trade Representative**

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**B. Broadband**

**Contributing Programs and Other Factors:**

**Department of Commerce**

- National Telecommunications and Information Administration
  - Broadband Technology Opportunities Program
  - State Broadband Initiative

**Federal Communications Commission**

- National Broadband Plan
- Universal Service Fund Reforms

**Department of Agriculture**

- Rural Utilities Service
  - Broadband Initiative Program
  - Rural Broadband Loan Program
  - Community Connect Grants
  - Rural Telecom Loan Program
  - Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program

**First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet)**

**White House Executive Order: Accelerating Broadband Infrastructure Deployment**

- Department of Defense
- Department of Interior
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Commerce
- Department of Transportation
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Federal Communications Commission
- Council on Environmental Quality
- Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

- National Security Staff
  - Co-Chairs: Government Services Administration and Department of Homeland Security
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## **C. Energy Efficiency**

**Contributing Programs and Other Factors:** The following agencies and programs are the main contributors to the strategies outlined in this document:

### **The White House**

- Office of Energy and Climate (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/energy>)
- Council on Environmental Quality (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq>)
- Sustainability Scorecards (<http://sustainability.performance.gov/>)

### **Department of Energy**

- Energy Information Administration  
(<http://www.eia.gov/>)
- Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE), Building Technologies Program  
(<http://www1.eere.energy.gov/buildings/>)
- Better Buildings Challenge  
(<http://www1.eere.energy.gov/buildings/betterbuildings/>)
- Advanced Manufacturing Office  
(<https://www1.eere.energy.gov/manufacturing/>)
- Weatherization Assistance Program  
(<http://www1.eere.energy.gov/wip/wap.html>)
- Vehicle Technologies Program  
(<http://www1.eere.energy.gov/vehiclesandfuels/about/index.html>)
- Federal Energy Management Program  
(<http://www1.eere.energy.gov/femp/about/emff.html>)

### **Environmental Protection Agency**

- ENERGY STAR (<http://www.energystar.gov/>)
- Office of Air and Radiation, Transportation and Air Quality (<http://www.epa.gov/otaq/>)

### **Housing and Urban Development**

- Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities  
([http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/sustainable\\_housing\\_communities](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/sustainable_housing_communities))

### **Department of Transportation**

- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
(<http://www.nhtsa.gov/>)
- Federal Railroad Administration  
(<http://www.fra.dot.gov/rpd/passenger/31.shtml>)

## Department of Defense

- Facilities Energy & Privatization Directorate  
(<http://www.acq.osd.mil/ie/energy/index.shtml>)

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## D. Veteran Career Readiness

### 1. Contributing Programs and Other Factors

Agencies contributing in part or in whole to this goal include the following:

- Offices of the First Lady and Dr. Biden (Joining Forces)
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Department of Defense
- Department of Labor
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Small Business Administration

The Federal government is just one of a number of stakeholders that are dedicated to reaching this goal. To accomplish this goal, non-Federal agencies also bring their unique assets to collaborations in order to change the way we support successful veteran reintegration into society.

### 2. Additional References

National Resource Directory:

<https://www.nrd.gov/>

eBenefits Portal:

<https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/>

My Next Move for Veterans:

<http://www.mynextmove.org/vets/>

Veteran Gold Card:

<http://www.dol.gov/vets/goldcard.html>

Joining Forces:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/joiningforces>

Hiring Our Heroes:

<http://www.uschamber.com/hiringourheroes>

Veteran Recruiting:

<http://veteranrecruiting.com/>

## **E. STEM Education**

### **1. Contributing Programs and Other Factors**

Programs likely to contribute in part or in whole to this goal include the following. This list may be modified over time.

#### **Department of Education**

- Mathematics and Science Partnerships Program/Effective Teaching and Learning for a Complete Education
- Investing in Innovation Fund
- Improving Teacher Quality State Grants/Effective Teacher and Leader State Grants
- Developing Hispanic Serving Institutions STEM and articulation programs
- Proposed K-16 Mathematics Education Program (in collaboration with NSF)
- Upward Bound Math and Science
- Teacher Loan Forgiveness
- Supporting Effective Educator Development
- Minority Science and Engineering Improvement Program

#### **NASA**

- National Space Grant College and Fellowship Program
- Minority University Research Education Program
- Formal and Informal Education
- Elementary and Secondary Education
- Higher Education

#### **National Science Foundation**

- Priority Goal: Develop a diverse and highly qualified STEM workforce motivated to participate at the frontiers
- Proposed K-16 Mathematics Education Program (in collaboration with ED)
- Advanced Technological Education (ATE)
- Expeditions in Education (E2)
- Minority Serving Institutions Programs
- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Expansion Program (STEP)
- Transforming Undergraduate Education in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (TUES)
- Widening Implementation and Demonstration of Evidence Based Reforms (WIDER)
- Cyberlearning: Transforming Education Program

#### **Department of Health and Human Services - National Institutes of Health**

- NIH Undergraduate Research Experiences to Support Science Learning
- NIH Intramural Summer Internship Program
- Short-Term Research Education Program to Increase Diversity in Health-Related Research
- Short Term Educational Experiences for Research (STEER) in the Environmental Health Sciences for Undergraduates and High School Students

- Bridges to the Baccalaureate Program
- Research Initiative for Scientific Enhancement
- Undergraduate Scholarship Program for Individuals from Disadvantaged Backgrounds
- MARC Undergraduate Student Training in Academic Research

### **Other Factors:**

A number of organizations, foundations, and institutions of higher education, have expressed interest in meeting the President’s challenge to graduate 1 million more STE M graduates by 2022. To accomplish this goal, agencies will bring their unique assets to collaborations with institutions of higher education, foundations, and other stakeholders in order to institutionalize the use of evidence-based STEM teaching practices and course design at 2-year and 4-year institutions of higher education. Thus, the creation of partnerships between the Federal Government and these stakeholders will be needed, and actions by non-federal entities will an essential piece of successfully accomplishing this CAP goal.

The Administration has also created the Educate to Innovate Campaign which, through public private partnerships, launched a STEM media campaign, held three White House Science Fairs, developed National STEM Design Competitions, and supported the creation of Change the Equation (a non-profit organization that coordinates the efforts of industry and foundations that support STEM education). Public-private partnerships related to these efforts have also spawned movements such as 100Kin10, a effort with over 100 federal, industry and foundation partners dedicated to reaching the President’s goal of training 100,000 new effective K-12 STEM teachers over the next 10 years.

## **2. Additional References**

Charter of the Committee on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education  
[http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/costem\\_charter\\_signed\\_01-31-11.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/costem_charter_signed_01-31-11.pdf)

Coordinating Federal Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education Investments: Progress Report  
[http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/nstc\\_federal\\_stem\\_education\\_coordination\\_report.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/nstc_federal_stem_education_coordination_report.pdf)

Prepare and Inspire: K-12 Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Education for America’s Future  
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/pcast-stem-ed-final.pdf>

Engage to Excel: Producing One Million Additional College Graduates with Degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.  
[http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/pcast-engage-to-excel-final\\_2-25-12.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/pcast-engage-to-excel-final_2-25-12.pdf)

Federal Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education 5-Year Strategic Plan: A Report from the Committee on STEM Education, National Science and Technology Council.  
[http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/stem\\_stratplan\\_2013.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/stem_stratplan_2013.pdf).



## **F. Job Training**

### **1. Contributing Programs and Other Factors**

The following is a partial list of the programs contributing to the Job Training CAP goal (other programs with potential to contribute to this goal may be identified over time):

#### **Department of Labor:**

- Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth)
- WIA National Emergency Grants
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
- TAA Community College & Career Training grants
- High-Growth (H-1B) Job Training grants
- Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) grants
- Registered Apprenticeship programs
- Veterans job training programs
- Senior Community Service Employment Program
- Job Corps
- YouthBuild

#### **Department of Education:**

- Career and Technical Education
- Vocational Rehabilitation grants

#### **Department of Health and Human Services:**

- TANF Employment & Training
- Health Professions Opportunity Grants

#### **Other Agencies:**

- SNAP Employment & Training (Department of Agriculture)
- Youth Challenge grants (Department of Defense)
- Federal Highway On the Job Training and Supportive Services Program (Department of Transportation)
- University Transportation Centers (Department of Transportation)
- Vocational Rehabilitation grants (Department of Veterans Affairs)

### **2. Additional References**

American Job Center website (<http://www.jobcenter.usa.gov>)